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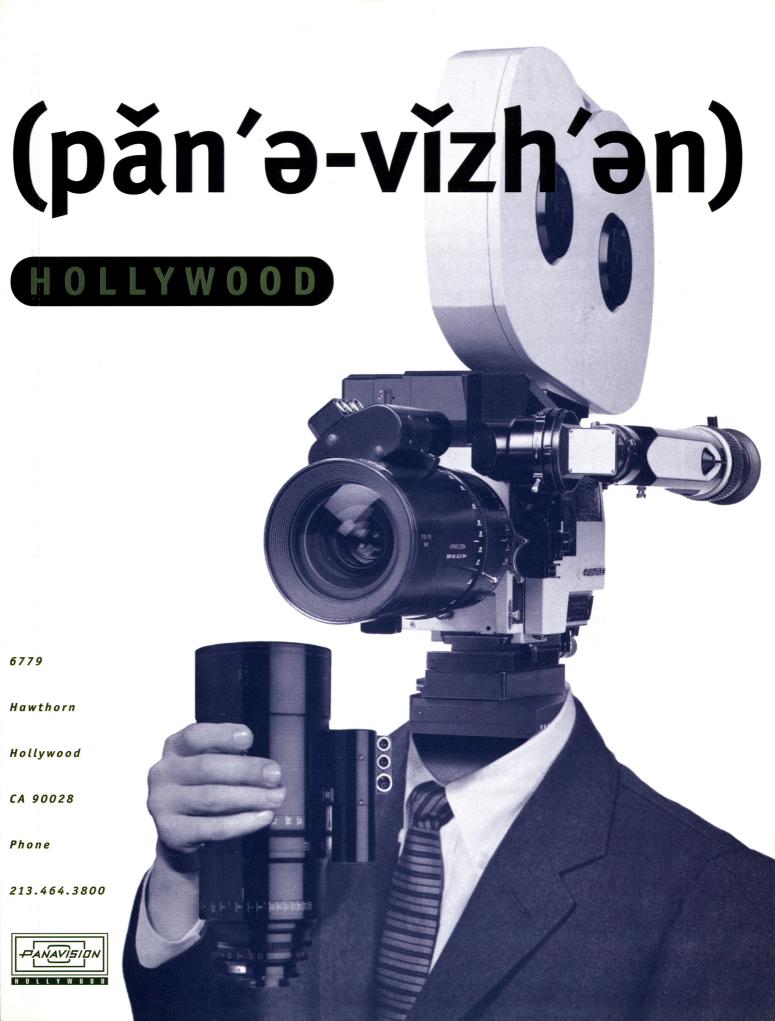
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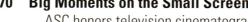
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#### On Our Cover:

A pair of stormchasing scientists (Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton) watch in awe as a giant tornado bears down on them in Twister, directed by Jan DeBont, ASC and photographed by Jack Green, ASC (photo by David James, courtesy of Warner Bros.).

#### Contributing Authors:

Bob Fisher John Gallagher Naomi Pfefferman Chris Probst David Wiener



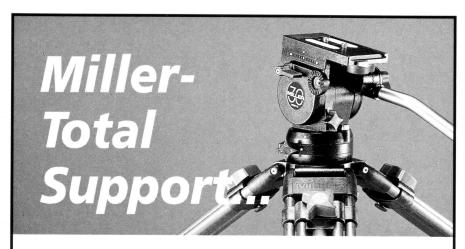
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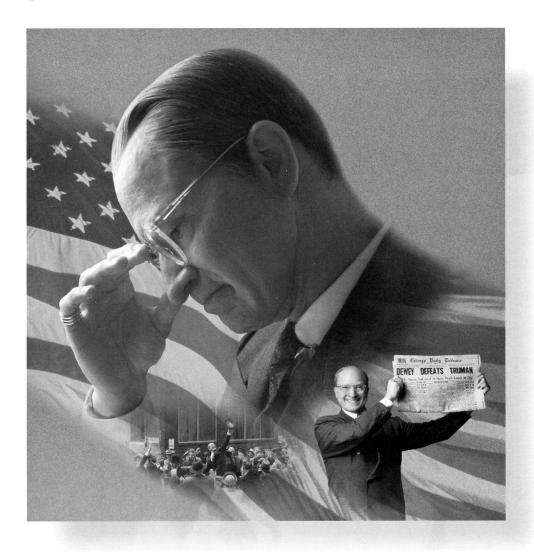
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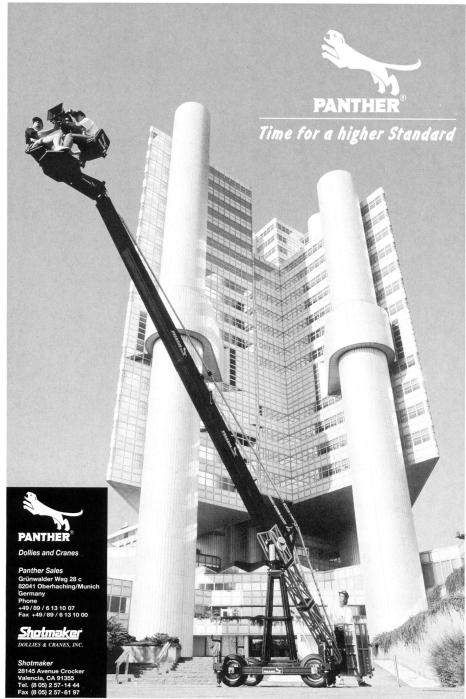
## TRUMAN

## **Paul Elliott**

For Outstanding Achievement In Cinematography For 1995 In The Category Of Movie Of The Week Or Pilot









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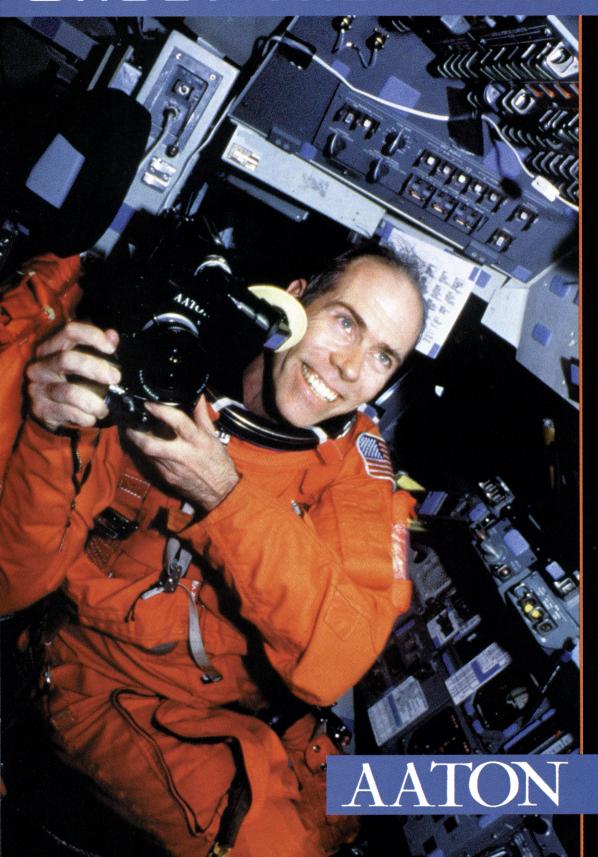
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## New at Clairmont: three high-tech VistaVision cameras from Wilcam

Zeiss lenses, mirror shutter, rotating finder, video tap, 2–200 frames, tachometer, remote controls, strobes, crystal sync-sound with no blimp.

Ve now have three types of VistaVision camera. All made by Wilcam; all state-of-the-art. Ours are the W7, the W9 and the W11. They look similar; the one you see here is the silent-running, sync-sound W11.

## High speed, crystal-control

The W7 and the W9 are variable-speed and not silent. The W7 gives you 2 to 200 frames per second, crystal-controlled up to 64 fps, within 0.5% above that. The W9 goes 2 to 100 frames, forward and reverse; all speeds crystal-controlled. Both cameras have tachometer readouts, as well as crystal-sync LEDs.

## Eight claws, six register pins

The W9 uses six full-size registration pins and four claws. The W7 has six pins and *eight* claws. On both cameras, the pins use different perfs from those used by the claws, for maximum registration accuracy.

## Vacuum back, balanced movement

For best possible film flatness, both cameras employ a vacuumback pressure plate. To minimize vibration, the 200 fps W7 even has a second, reciprocating movement. It doesn't transport or position the film. It *balances* the transport movement by moving in the opposite direction.

#### Gentle takeup

With both these high-speed cameras, you don't have to take up film slack by hand. When you throw the Power switch, after threading, torque motors in the magazines slowly take up the slack. The cameras then go into Standby mode. When you throw the Run/Stop switch, both cameras accelerate steadily to the set speed. 0 to 100 fps: 2 seconds. 0 to 200 fps:  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seconds.

#### Even wrap

Once at the speed you've selected, sensor arms maintain even tension in the feed and

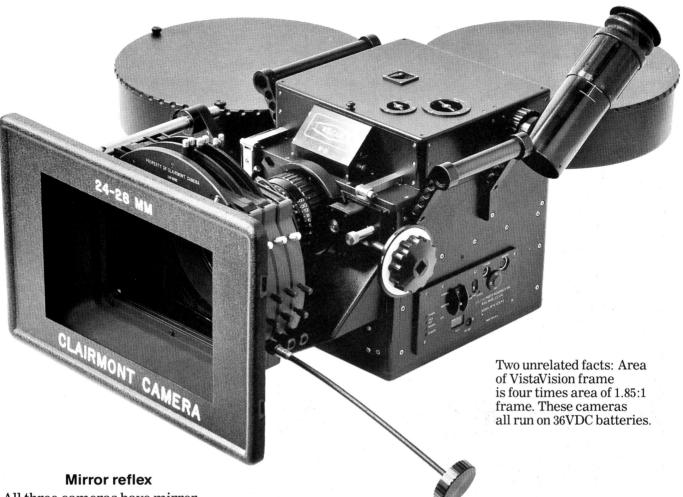
takeup rolls as they change size. At the end of the roll, infrared sensors signal both cameras to stop instantly. Mid-roll stops are fast but also smooth and well-controlled, because of the gear-driven torque motors.

#### Film path

All three cameras use two 1000 foot magazines: feed on the right side, takeup at the back. All magazines are horizontal, so the film travels horizontally all through the cameras—no twisting. On the silent-running W11, the magazines are belt-driven.

#### Sync sound

The W11 runs at 24, 25 and 30 fps, crystal sync. At 24 fps, it measures 24dBA or better, 3 meters from the film plane. And it needs no blimp. It uses two claws and six full-size registration pins. The pins use different perfs from those used by the claws. There's a strobe output on the control panel—pulses for film only or for film and finder.



All three cameras have mirrorshutter reflex viewing. The viewfinder system and video tap camera are enclosed within the body door. Two eyepiece modes: normal and 10 times magnified. Registered film clip holder at the groundglass. The finder rotates; the image stays upright automatically.

#### **Zeiss lenses**

All three cameras have a BNCR lens mount. But the big VistaVision mirror limits flange depth, so you can't use just any BNC mount lens. (And standard BNC mount lenses wouldn't cover the eight perf VistaVision frame.) We have sets of Zeiss fixed lenses: 28mm, 35mm, 50mm, 85mm, 100mm and 135mm. (The 28mm is like a 14mm on four perf 35mm, of course.)

#### Weights

With 1000 feet of film, two magazines and 50mm lens, weights to nearest pound are W9: 40 lbs, W11: 60 lbs, W7: 102 lbs.

#### Modern mattebox

As you can see in the photo, these cameras work with a standard gear-driven follow-focus and with the new 6.6 535 mattebox. Its front filter stage is also gear-driven, for moving grads across the frame. That's the flexible control for it, in the foreground.

#### **Experienced**

Wayne Baker has been a First Assistant since 1982, specializing in 2nd Unit action, visual effects, aerial and underwater. He has worked with eight types of 65mm camera and six types of Vista-Vision. "I've used all the weird cameras," he says.

#### **Easiest**

"I've worked with VistaVision cameras on which a reload could take fifteen or twenty minutes. Once you're familiar with it, threading the Wilcams is straightforward; reloads take three to five minutes. I find the Wilcam VistaVisions the easiest to work with," says Mr. Baker, "More versatile, faster, more reliable, newer."

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#### Letters

### Academy Commits Sin of Omission

No disrespect to those chosen, but in the process of selecting nominees for this year's Academy Awards, how on Earth did we overlook Darius Khondji, AFC's extraordinary work on *Seven*?

I've just seen the film, in excellent presentation at Copenhagen's Scala 1 Cinema. In my opinion, [Khondji's work] merits the highest recognition, not only for its dark and compelling imagery, but perhaps more importantly for the way in which the cinematographer has used his craft to serve and advance the narrative, to the point where the photography and story become inseparable.

Surely this is the goal we all aspire to in bringing a story to the screen, and seldom have I seen it done better — certainly not within the last year in a mainstream movie.

So where are the accolades? Khondji and *Seven* have my vote.

— Stuart Dryburgh Copenhagen, Denmark

Ed. note: It should be noted that while Khondji was overlooked by the Academy, his superb work on Seven did earn him an ASC Award nomination. Khondji's photography on Stealing Beauty, the upcoming film by Bernardo Bertolucci, will be covered in AC's June issue.

#### **Poor Crop**

I just picked up the VHS widescreen editions of *Pulp Fiction* and *Star Trek: Generations*. I have noticed an interesting and annoying detail in *Generations* involving the opening sequence of the champagne bottle breaking on the hull of the Enterprise B.

In the original pan-and-scan release, the camera appears to be panning to the right with the bottle. As the bottle breaks, the camera pans beyond the point of impact, continuing far enough over to reveal the "B" in the ship's registry number. In the widescreen video release, we see that the original shot was not a pan, but in fact is tilting

slightly upwards as the bottle impacts. Because of the widescreen, the point of impact and the registry number can both be in the frame at the same time. However, the "B" is offscreen! There is just a bit of the letter's vertical line, and the rest is out of frame.

I seem to remember the "B" being visible in the theater, and obviously the "B" is an important detail that should be established onscreen in that shot. So, is this widescreen release the entire theatrical image or not? If it is. could my TV be cropping the image from the VCR? Will the videophile in me lose control and force me to watch both Generations and Pulp Fiction in both widescreen and pan-and-scan at the same time, searching for minute framing mistakes? All I want is the entire original image as intended by the director and cinematographer. Is that asking so much?

> — Scott Pearson St. Paul, MN

#### **Editor at Large**

I appreciate the technical articles, the color photographs and the interviews in your magazine. Reading it, you feel up to date with technology, camera techniques, emulsions and whatever else is new in the world of American cinematography.

At the same time, there is so much more that could be done to celebrate the richness and profundity of the art of cinematography. For example, you could include articles that examine themes in one cinematographer's body of work, trace the development of specific techniques (e.g., the dolly shot, the zoom, etc.) or look at genres from a cinematographic perspective.

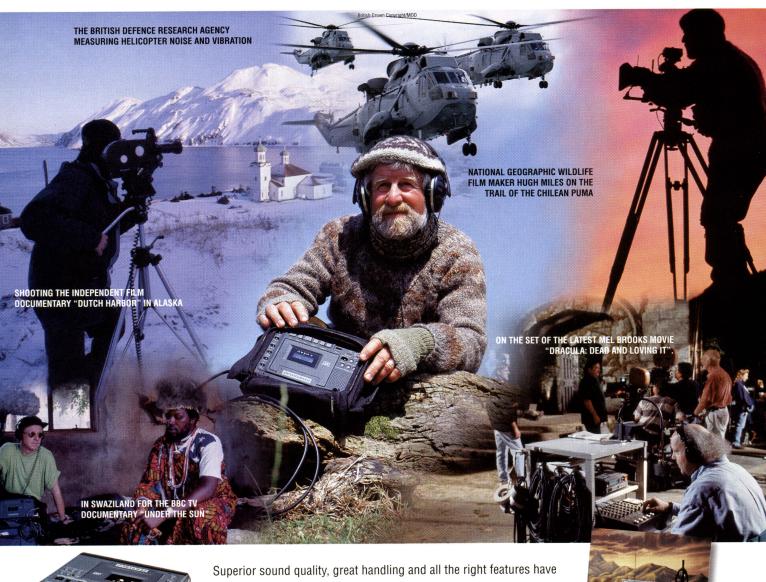
As one of the few voices for the medium, *American Cinematographer* could do more to uphold the tradition of cinematography, and the meaning it has for cinema.

— Sasha Meyerowitz DPNY @ aol.com



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#### **Historical Soars**

My hat's off to George Turner for his piece on *The Last Squadron* (*AC* February 96). It was very well-researched, with a good collection of production stills and a lobby card to boot. As a reader of the Bible — I mean *American Cinematographer* — for over 30 years, I look forward to reading about the production and cinematography of classic films, which is pure joy. When will we have a book of George's work?

I would also love to see a piece on Daniel L. Fapp, ASC's work on West Side Story. As an Army still photographer in France in the Sixties, I would go to see the film at the cinema every time I hit Paris — about 30 times. In 1961 Fapp was up for two Oscars in cinematography, one for color for West Side Story, and the other for black-and-white for One, Two, Three. He won for his work on West Side Story, but lost the black-and-white category to Eugen Shuftan and The Hustler.

Thanks, Mr. Turner: keep diggin'.

— Mark Henley Chico, CA

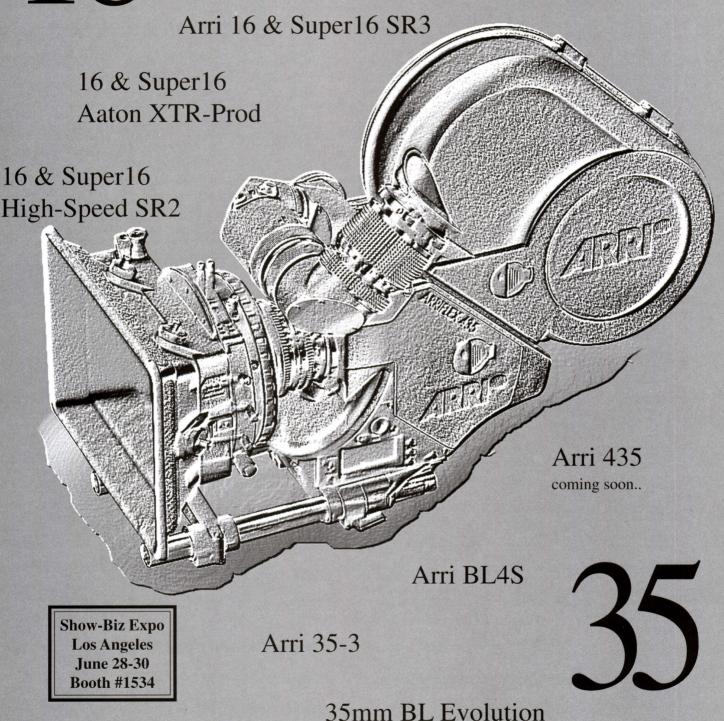
Ed note: George Turner's superlative writing on historical films can be found in a number of books. Volumes currently in print include The Cinema of Adventure. Romance and Terror and The ASC Treasury of Visual Effects (both available through the ASC Press, 213-969-4333), as well as Human Monsters: The Bizarre Psychology of Movie Villains (co-written with Michael H. Price, available through Kitchen Sink Press, 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, MA 01060). Two other books are currently out of print, but copies occasionally turn up at bookstores with good cinema sections: The Making of King Kong (a definitive history of the 1933 classic, co-written with Orville Goldner) and Forgotten Horrors (co-written with Michael H. Price).

#### **Errata**

In last issue's article on Quantel's Domino system ("Box of Tricks"), the Los Angeles effects company that worked on Mulholland Falls was misidentified. The facility in question is Digital Rezolution ("D.REZ"), Cinema Research Corporation's digital affiliate. American Cinematographer regrets the error.

# 16

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#### The Post Process

## An Update on Networking

#### by Debra Kaufman

Recent developments in networking have brought filmmakers one step closer to its varied and innovative uses in postproduction. EDnet, Inc., which went public in November, announced an agreement to acquire Mad River Technologies (MRT) and its VideoFax system. EDnet president David Gustafson reports that the MRT acquisition is just the first of many future actions aimed at creating a video network that exceeds EDnet's existing audio network. According to Gustafson, the EDnet audio network, now comprised of 200 audio affiliates, doubled in size in the last year.

Prior to acquiring MRT, EDnet already had limited ability to fax video with its International VideoFax, an Australian technology. Through International VideoFax, Ednet has been affiliated with 30 sites worldwide and three U.S. sites (Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco). With the acquisition of MRT, EDnet now takes ownership of the MRT Videofax sites around the country. That includes ad agencies such as Wieden & Kennedy; post facilities Editel/LA, Editel/ NY and Post Perfect/NY; and editorial houses Windmill Lane and Mad River Post in Santa Monica, San Francisco and New York

Mad River Technologies, an offshoot of Mad River Post, was founded by Mad River Post CEO/CFP Michael Porte and Kim Gould. The duo developed VideoFax, a non-real-time means of transmitting approval-quality video over existing phone lines, for client Foote, Cone and Belding, an Anaheim-based ad agency client tired of traffic jams on the 405 freeway.

According to Gustafson, the MRT acquisition means that EDnet will develop new video-oriented products. Towards that end, former MRT president Gould has come on board as director of new product development. At NAB, EDnet debuted its first such product, a new video-and-graphics-oriented net-

working service.

Other corporations have also stepped up their networking ventures. On March 7 and 8, "Digital Production '96," a collaboration between Pacific Bell, Hollywood Center Studios and post house Hollywood Digital, showcased the entertainment industry applications of Pacific Bell's Advanced Video Service (AVS) network. One interactive demonstration utilizing Pacific's Bell's fiberoptic AVS network was a remote, realtime collaboration on a Toyota commercial between a (remote) ad agency creative, a (remote) Henry artist at Hollywood Digital and an on-site Avid editor from Red Car Editorial. The AVS network's voice-activated videoconferencing system allowed the participants in the remote edit session to see one another.

In addition to the virtual bay for remote viewing/approvals and editing, Pacific Bell showcased asset management, Internet services and networked audio. Cinebase, a visual assest management system from Visual f/x, is a means of building libraries of films, videos, animations, photographs and other visual content. Cinebase provides on-demand access to files, performs file format conversations on over 23 media types, controls numerous film/video devices and protects content through security mechanisms. Current Cinebase users include The Discovery Channel, stock footage library Energy Productions, Warner Bros. Imaging Technology and Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation.

The ability to send audio remotely was shown with Dolby Fax. It consists of three rack-mounted units (which include all cabling and a Windows-based dialing program) that requires two ISDN lines. Dolby product manager Chris Reilly reports that Dolby Fax can be purchased outright or leased as needed on a day-by-day basis. Dolby Fax is aimed at the music and film

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postproduction arenas.

Pacific Bell also demonstrated its Internet services (for interested Web surfers, they can be reached at http://www.pbi.net). In addition to direct access to the Net, Pacific Bell offers a 24-hour 800 number for repairs and trouble-shooting, and free graphic support for creating a basic content page. A complete dial-up product aimed at individuals working at home will be available next month.

Pacific Bell also offers a various levels of videoconferencing solutions. Dubbed "Infrequent Flyer," for what a Pac Bell spokesperson says is "the company's intent to put the airlines out of business," the service levels range from — you guessed it — Economy Class and Commuter Class to First Class. (AVS uses Connoisseur Class). By May, Pac Bell, in conjunction with other vendors, will be opening a video conferencing center in New York, with another scheduled for Chicago later in the year.

For networking inside a facility or to buildings close by (as on a studio or television lot), Prisa Networks announced its "new generation" networking hardware and software system for high-speed digital networks. According to Prisa president Marc Friedmann, the NetFX-HI064 Network Adapters and NetFX Loop Hubs for SGI's Onyx computer and Challenge video server (coupled with the NetFX workstation cards) enable large blocks of data to be moved at more than a gigabyte per second between SGI servers and workstations, RAIDs and other peripheral devices.

The NetFX workstation/server system will be beta-tested for networking and storage applications by Eastman Kodak's Cineon division, 525 Post Production in Hollywood, Pacific Ocean Post in Santa Monica, Silicon Falcon Systems and Maximum Strategy.

One final note regarding long-distance, fiber-optic networks: the user's biggest obstacles have arisen with multiple RBOCs (regional Bell operating companies) and encoder/decoders (codecs). Not all the RBOCs have been proponents of networking (I've heard many a complaint about NYNEX and Bell Atlantic) and the codecs don't all speak the same language. But the recent overhaul of the Telecommunications Act may open the door to significant changes, as long-distance providers are able to grant short-distance service, and vice versa.



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#### Production Slate

#### compiled by Chris Pizzello

#### **Lost Musical Discovered**

New York-based film company Archive Films recently unearthed *Devil's Cabaret* in the film library of an Arizona junk shop and turned it over to Turner Entertainment Co. (TEC). As part of Turner Broadcasting's ongoing commitment to film preservation, TEC is restoring the aged, two-color process Technicolor nitrate of the 17-minute film onto a modern celluloid stock. The retrieval and renewal of *Devil's Cabaret*, missing since 1931, was announced jointly in Los Angeles by Archive Films President Patrick Montgomery and TEC President Roger Mayer.

According to Dick May, vice president of film preservation and distribution services for the Turner Entertainment Company, there's an interesting history behind *Devil's Cabaret*. It's a portion of a never-released musical feature *The March of Time*, one of many musicals from the early era of sound pictures which were scrapped due to poor audience response.

"The studios produced so many musicals between 1929 and 1931 which had no cohesive storyline that the public rejected the entire genre," notes May. "It wasn't until 1933, when Warner Bros. made the hit 42nd Street, that the public accepted and embraced the musical for the first time."

Turner Entertainment Group, (310) 788-6905, Archive Films, (212) 620-3955.

### Spike Lee Shoots Popular Ad at Production Center

Chapman/Leonard Studios & Production Center served as a home to director Spike Lee and his production company, Forty Acres and a Mule, for a new Nike commercial. The spot starred Orlando Magic point guard Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway and supermodel Tyra Banks. Production designer Ina Mayhew decked out the stage as the sidelines of a game between the Magic and New York Knicks. Joining Lee, a diehard Knicks fan, and the 50 extras on the side-

lines was "Little Penny," the precocious puppet who keeps Hardaway in hot water in the popular series of commercials. Forty Acres key grip Lamont Crawford used the Chapman/Leonard Hybrid Camera Dolly and a full accessory package during the shoot.

Chapman/Leonard Studio Production Center, (407) 851-3456.

#### Digital Electronic Cinematography Shown at Sundance

Along with outstanding independent films by a new crop of emerging directors, the 1996 Sundance Film Festival offered a hands-on look at the possible future of filmmaking through its New Media Center. The Sony presentation area gave filmmakers a glance at Digital Electronic Cinematography (DEC).

Sony unveiled an electronic acquisition system centering around the DVW-700 Digital Betacam, a camcorder which combines many of attributes of film acquisition with the convenience

#### **Independent Spirit Awards**

Leaving Las Vegas was the big winner at the 11th annual Independent Spirit Awards, besting its competition in the Feature Film, Director, Actress and Cinematography categories. The ceremony, which took place in a beachfront tent in Santa Monica, CA on Saturday, March 23, drew well over 1,000 guests. Among them were such stars as Nicolas Cage, Sean Penn, Nicole Kidman, Laurence Fishburne, Kevin Spacey, Jeff Goldblum, Laura Dern and Jennifer Jason Leigh. Serving as Master of Ceremonies for the Independent Feature Project/ West event was Samuel L. Jackson.

The Best Cinematography trophy went to Declan Quinn for his deft Super 16mm work on Leaving Las Vegas. Also vying for the award were Elliot Davis (The Underneath), Jim DeNault (Nadja), Tom Richmond (Little Odessa) and Newton Thomas Sigel (The Usual Suspects). Quinn and director Mike Figgis detailed their visual approach in a special "Beyond the Frame" in the February '96 issue of AC.

Winners in the afternoon's other categories were as follows:

Best Feature: Leaving Las Vegas.
Best First Feature: The Brothers McMullen.

Best Director: Mike Figgis, Leaving Las Vegas.
Best Debut Performance: Justin Pierce, Kids.
Best Male Lead: Sean Penn, Dead Man Walking.
Best Female Lead: Elizabeth Shue,

Leaving Las Vegas.

Best Supporting Male: Benicio Del Toro,
The Usual Suspects.

Best Supporting Female: Mare Winningham, *Georgia*.

**Best Screenplay:** Christopher McQuarrie, *The Usual Suspects.* 

Best First Screenplay: Paul Auster, Smoke. Best Foreign Film: Before the Rain (Macedonia).

In addition to its regular slate of honors, the IFP also presented several special recognition awards. Legendary director Sam Fuller received a standing ovation as the debut honoree of the Special Distinction Award. Director Christopher Münch scored the Swatch Someone to Watch Award for *Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day*, the film for which Rob Sweeney won the Best Cinematography Award at this year's Sundance Film Festival (see AC April '96). Finally, Sony Pictures Classics was saluted with the Findie (Friends of Independents) Award.



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#### **Howard Tops DGA Awards Bill**

Ron Howard's stellar direction on the summer blockbuster *Apollo 13* was overlooked by Academy voters, but he snagged top honors at the Director's Guild of America Awards, held on March 2 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Howard made his acceptance at a separate ceremony in New York, where he was completing his upcoming project, *Ransom*.

The last time a director took the DGA Award in spite of an Oscar snub was in 1985, when the guild named Steven Spielberg Best Director for *The Color Purple*.

Joining Howard at the New York ceremony were two of the other four nominees — Mike Figgis, director of *Leaving Las Vegas*, and Ang Lee, nominated for *Sense and Sensibility*. Nominees Mel Gibson (*Braveheart*) and Michael Radford (*Il Postino*) attended the Los Angeles fete.

Other award-winners included Terry Zwigoff in the documentary category (*Crumb*); Mick Jackson for direction of a dramatic special (HBO Pictures' *Indictment: The McMartin Trial*); Gordon Hunt for sitcom directing (*Mad About You*, "The Alan Brady Show"); Christopher Chulack for directorial achievement in a dramatic television series (*ER*, "Hell and High Water"); William Ludel and Alan Pultz for direction of a daytime television serial (*General Hospital*); Matthew Diamond for best direction in the musical variety category ("Some Enchanted Evening," a WNET-13 and PBS co-production celebrating the work of lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II); and Robert Lieberman for commercial direction ("Sisters, Already Retired" for Merrill Lynch and "Jeffrey's Secret" for Hallmark).

The DGA presented several special awards as well. In Los Angeles, the guild bestowed legendary animator Chuck Jones with honorary membership. Tony Verna, the man credited with the invention of "instant replay," earned a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in the arena of sports.

Last but not least, Woody Allen was given the D.W. Griffith Award for distinguished achievement in film direction. Accepting the award for the director — who was in Vienna performing with his jazz band — were actresses Mira Sorvino in New York and Drew Barrymore in Los Angeles. During a video acceptance speech shown at both ceremonies, Allen joked that the DGA should sweeten the Griffith Award with a cash honor in the vicinity of "a half million."

and versatility of digital video. Inside the presentation area, audiences watched footage (gathered from all over the world) on the DVW-700 intended for the theatrical and broadcast mediums. (Those scenes were presented in addition to television program footage shot with 35mm film.) The camcorder was also used to acquire footage for Apple Computer's QuickTime live Internet presentation of festival events (an arrangement made by Sundance Institute founding trustee lan Calderon).

In the past year, the professional video camera has been used in feature and documentary productions by directors Spike Lee and Jonathan Demme, and it appears regularly as a production tool on Barry Levinson's television series *Homicide: Life on the Street*.

First-time feature directors note that the camera not only facilitates reduced working costs, it lets them view shots in full color as they transpire. New

York director Deborah Dobski used it to shoot the full-length feature *Dying is Easy*.

"Shooting in widescreen dispelled any reservations I had about working in video," Dobski says. "The fact that we could make the shot look good so quickly enabled us to shoot in many more locations than is typically permissible with low-budget features."

Sony Electronics, (201) 930-6981.

#### **Animated Cut-Outs**

Boston-based Olive Jar Studios has animated cut-outs (drawn in a child-like style) for spots in which kids explain how Kraft squeezes five ounces of milk into a single slice of cheese.

The two 30-second spots, produced for Chicago agency J. Walter Thompson, follows the theme of its predecessors with an added technical and artistic twist. Olive Jar's director/animator Rich Ferguson-Hull designed cut-out

animation in a vertical multi-plane set. It gave the spots a completely different design than that of traditional animation.

Interwoven with live action were sequences in which children explained how the "Dairy Fairy," a miniature cow bearing wings and wand, changes milk into cheese, and how a "Magic Waterfall" of milk transforms boats into slices of cheese.

According to Olive Jar's creative director, Fred Macdonald, the spots' success can be attributed largely to Ferguson-Hull's innovative dimensional multi-plane approach. "Rich's configuration provided flexibility in perspective and focus, ultimately allowing the final spots to be as subtle and dimensional as desired," he comments.

Yet, in spite of the very detailed effort given to the art design, camera movement and rich back-lighting, the overall presentation remained lighthearted, simple and child-oriented.

Agency art director Tracey Locke adds, "The approach was effective because we could create the desired depth with the layered 3-D effect, but not lose the childlike perspective that an actual 3-D set would render."

Olive Jar Animation, (617) 783-9500, FAX (617) 783-9544.

#### Spots Place Viewer Inside Sports

Sports Channel N.Y. has teamed with Crossroads Television and West End Editorial (the full service editorial house at National Video Center) on one of the first advertising campaigns to use state-of-the-art Digital Videocassette Pro Technology. The series of commercials places the viewer in the center of NBA and NHL action through the eyes of the courtside cameraman, rinkside sound-man and control-room director.

Crossroads sought out editor Douglas Tishman, managing director of West End Editorial, to capture the excitement of the two fastest sports on television. Says Crossroads producer Rob Battles, "The edit process was key to achieving the look and feel of actually playing in the game. We told Douglas what we were looking for, then left him alone to come up with a creative approach to the edit. He returned with a personal perspective on how to manipulate the footage and script we had given him."

The footage, shot in DVC-Pro by director/cinematographer John





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DENECKE, INC. 5417- B CAHUENGA BLVD. N. HOLLYWOOD, CA 91601 (818) 766-3525, FAX(818) 766-0269 Bonano, was manipulated in-camera to look like film. The camera's small size and format allowed Bonano to shoot closer to the playing field.

West End Editorial, (212) 279-2000.

## Stormy Weather Specialists

As the world's largest producer of severe weather-related television programming, Prairie Pictures has created a number of award-winning documentaries in the last seven years. Along with their upcoming release, *The Chasers of Tornado Alley*, these programs include *Surviving Tornado Alley* (1989), *Chasing the Wind* (1991), *Beneath Stormy Skies* (1994) and last year's *StormWatch*.

The company's success in the severe weather arena can be attributed largely to the storm-chasing experience of Martin Lisius, the founder, producer and director of Prairie Pictures. His efforts were key to the award-winning 1991 public television documentary *Chasing the Wind,* the first program dedicated entirely to the topic of storm chasing.

In 1993, Lisius established the StormStock library to fulfill the many requests Prairie received for storm footage. Lisius has stood in 100 m.p.h. microburst winds and dodged baseball-size hail to photograph images for StormStock. The library, which features hundreds of tor-

nado, lightning and hurricane cuts, caters to the needs of broadcasters, advertising agencies and documentary makers worldwide. Recent StormStock endeavors include National Geographic's *Cyclone* and Michael Jackson's *Earth Song* music video

Prairie Pictures' latest venture is The Chasers of Tornado Alley, the long awaited sequel to Chasing the Wind. Like its predecessor, this 48-minute documentary follows storm chasers in action across the infamous Tornado Alley region of the Central U.S. Its climax documents storm chase activities during the incredible Texas Panhandle tornado of June 8, 1995. The Chasers of Tornado. Alley is being prepared for broadcast and home video this spring in tandem with Twister, a theatrical release written by Michael Crichton and directed by Jan DeBont, ASC (see story this issue). Twister's Dean Lindsay hosts and narrates The Chasers of Tornado Allev.

Prairie Pictures, (817) 276-9500.

#### Film Recorder Improvement

Minneapolis-based Management Graphics, Inc., (MGI) has signed an agreement to share technology with Quantel for improved contrast and color purity in MGI film recorders. In this exclusive deal, Management Graphics will have access to display technology in-

#### Society of Motion Picture Still Photography Exhibit

The newly founded, Los-Angeles based Society of Motion Picture Still Photographers (SMPSP) is presenting an inaugural exhibit of their members work entitled "Single Frames." Both humorous and candid, the collection of stills take a behind-the-scenes look at actors, directors and the filmmaking process. Run with the cooperation of the major Hollywood studios, "Single Frames" is on display through May 11 at the G. Ray Hawkins Gallery in Santa Monica.

Created by a group of 14 prominent still photographers, the SMPSP hopes to foster an appreciation for production still photographs, as well as a concern for their preservation.

"We formed this honorary 'society' as a non-political entity to raise visibility around the world for all production still photographers whose work has long been under-appreciated," says founding member Peter Sorel. "Our work follows in the tradition of Clarence Bull, Ted Allan and George Hurrell, photographers who proved that great artistry exists on Hollywood soundstages and locations."

A representative selection of the stills will be donated to the permanent photographic collection of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Margaret Herrick Library.

Peter Sorel, SMPSP Member, (818) 345-9753.

Marla Kennedy, Director G. Ray Hawkins Gallery, (310) 394-5558.



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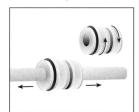
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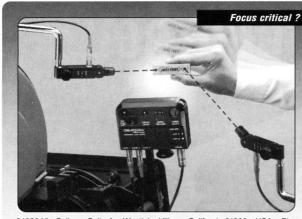
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The Phoenix at work, shown here with the CAMS Digital Remote Control Head.

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MGI develops and manufactures Solitaire Image Recorders, which have been used to image futuristic special effects and animation in films including *Toy Story, Casper, Forrest Gump, The Mask, GoldenEye, Jurassic Park, Terminator 2* and *Batman Forever.* 

Jim Teter, President of Management Graphics, comments, "We are excited to have access to Quantel's technique. Our Solitaire Cine III Image Recorders have achieved dramatic improvements in sharpness, clarity and contrast, resulting in new levels of price performance for the end user."

Management Graphics, (612) 854-1220, FAX, (612) 851-6159.

#### **Twinkies Return to TV**

Interstate Bakeries' Hostess Twinkies and Hostess Cupcakes marks the end of its five-year absence from television in an over-the-top campaign directed by Atherton & Associates' David Bishop.

The director's challenge was to devise suspenseful situations in which a ravenous bear and a hunting shark zero in on Hostess Twinkies and Cupcakes, only to find that things are not as they seem.

To drive home his comedic point, Bishop plays off the device of mistaken identity, but adds a subtle twist. In the first scenario, a bear mistakes a yellow Airstream trailer, parked in a forest, for a giant Twinkie. In the second spot, a shark perceives a Hostess Cupcake in the white squiggle design on the bottom of a bather's swimsuit.

"In 'Shark' and 'Bear' we wanted to set up a comic contrast between the real world and a human-cartoon style environment, standing the usual animal vs. man relationship on its head," comments Bishop. "Both spots open in a realistic manner and then, as the animals move in for the kill, cross the boundary into bizarre comedy as the disappointed beasts ask, 'Where's the cream filling?'"

Both spots required extensive rigging and Discreet Logik's FLAME to effect the contrast between the real and animated world, and to help the animals deliver the punch line.

The complicated underwater photography in "Shark" required two

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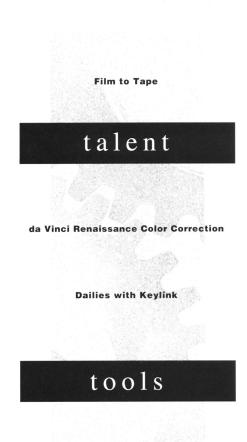
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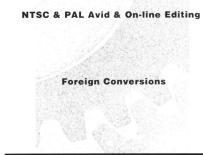






Motorcycle model courtesy of Viewpoint Datalabs. ElectricImage $^{\sim}$  and character are trademarks of Electric Image, Inc.





## experience

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long days in a 17-foot-deep swimming pool working with animatronics, models and a puppet. The shark was filmed against a green screen to allow Los Angeles visual effects house Planet Blue to composite stock footage of a tropical island, extend its horizon and then marry it to the sky.

Both spots also needed extensive FLAME work to give each animal a believable speaking voice. Rosenfeld drew tongues freehand in FLAME and then had to exaggerate them for correct diction, as the animals' tongues vary in shape — a shark's tongue is short and fat, while that of a bear is longer. To mimic speech patterns properly, FLAME artist and Planet Blue owner Maury Rosenfeld filmed his own mouth in synch with the animal's lines.

Atherton & Associates Inc., (212) 481-1110, FAX (212) 481-7844.

#### Effects Enhance Classic Tales

Succeeding as both biting satire and inventive fantasy, Jonathan Swift's classic *Gulliver's Travels* has engaged children and adults alike. This past February, NBC broadcast a two-part Hallmark Entertainment miniseries of the timeless tale from Jim Henson Productions. It was brought to life by lavish state-of-the-art effects from England's FrameStore, combined with Portuguese and British locations.

FrameStore's Tim Webber served as the film's visual effects supervisor, storyboarding and planning on-location effects in Portugal and at Shepperton, England. He supervised over 450 effects shots. To meet the tight shooting schedule, many of the effects used pioneering moving camera techniques (more than were previously possible without using motion control).

The miniseries was edited by Peter Coulson on a Lightworks System. FrameStore handled all on-line elements, from an early technical telecine grade (a low-contrast clean transfer that retains all picture information from the original negative) right through to scene compositing.

With many scenes being composed entirely of effects shots (a combination of separate shot backgrounds and blue-screen Gullivers of various heights), the production needed rough composites at an early stage to allow edit decisions to be made with actual timings and action.

FrameStore provided the film editor with weekly rough composite guides. Eventually a Lightworks EDL came back to FrameStore for final compositing work, which included multilayering with up to 20 separate elements, complex motion tracking and ripple effects. At the end of the 16-week postproduction schedule, the film was mastergraded after the conform, so that all of the shots could be graded in context

The enormity of the project prompted FrameStore to develop a special database that kept track of every stage of every shot (e.g. description, shot number, element timecodes, stage of action, finished, approved, time spent).

FrameStore, (0171) 208-2600, FAX (0171) 208-2600.

#### **Postproduction House**

Varitel in Los Angeles is currently furnishing postproduction services to Fox Television for the debut season of *MAD TV*, an hour-long comedy series based on the irreverent *Mad Magazine*.

For 19 episodes of the show, the facility is providing use of its Avid off-line editing systems as well as performing film transfer, on-line editing and post special effects work, and telecine for film-based segments.

Notes associate producer George Sledge, "Each episode consists of 15 to 20 sketches, and many of them require special attention in terms of building graphics and special effects editing."

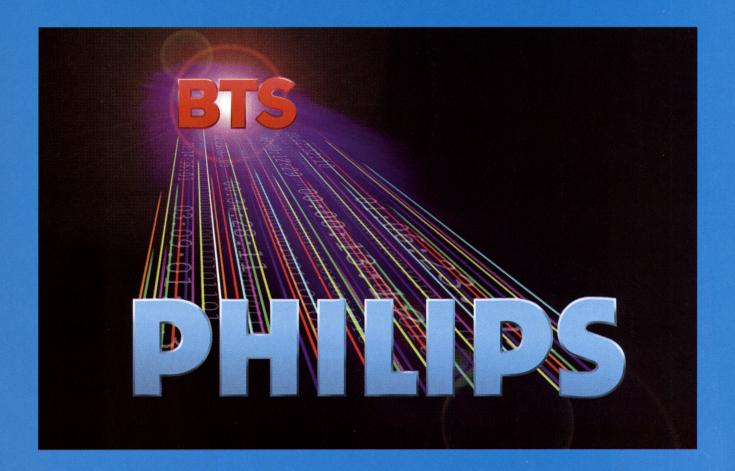
Many of MAD TV's outrageous special effects are created in Varitel's on-line bay. Editor Don Wilson devised a time-travel effect for a spoof of Quantum Leap in which O.J. Simpson's "dream team" of lawyers journeys to the past to defend Charles Manson and Jesus Christ.

The sketch itself was shot against a bluescreen stage with backgrounds and a pinwheel spiral graphic. Wilson used an Ultimatte to composite the actors, a Kaleidoscope to silhouette them with a hazy aura and a defocus wipe for their disappearance.

For a sketch entitled *Apollo the* 13th: Jason Takes NASA, Wilson used a similar compositing technique to make two bodies float through the cargo bay of a space ship (one with an ax in his midsection).

Varitel, (213) 850-1165.

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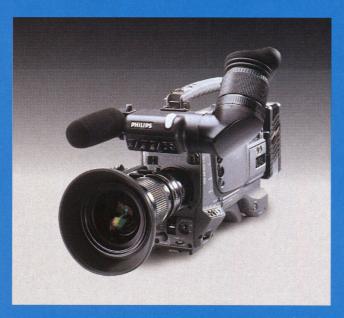
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To Many cinematographers, black is the most important aspect of the color spectrum. It gives them the tool with which to model faces, bring out textures and conceal mystery within shadows. While working on *The Craft*, cameraman Alexander Gruszynski found that Kodak's recently-released 5287 EXR stock offered him a unique way to capture many levels of darkness.

The cinematographer, nominated for an ASC Award this year for his work on the telefilm Kingfish: A Story of Huey P. Long [see full account on page 80], estimates that he used the 200 ASA tungsten-balanced emulsion for 90% of the production. (He chose the 200 after being surprised by its underexposure capabilities and, more unexpectedly, by how it rendered colors in bright, high-contrast daylight scenes.)

Collaborating for the third time with director Andrew Fleming (after *Bad Dreams* and *Threesome*), Gruszynski says *The Craft* concerns "four teenage girls who together explore the powers of witchcraft and eventually learn to use magic and sorcery skills to cast spells and put curses on others. One of them then turns against the protagonist as they compete for a boy's affections, and in the process the dark, evil forces are un-

leashed. It's a supernatural thriller, but not without the element of humor; it's basically a teenage fantasy about being able to make the one you love feel the same way about you."

The Polish director of photography notes, "Andy and I talked about the supernatural and surreal elements in the story, which becomes progressively darker, from its beginning in a fairly generic high school with a lot of colors to the ending set in this very dark, remote house. And the surreal elements come into play as the girls cast their spells. There's a point of departure in tone as these disturbing elements are introduced, and that is reflected in both the produc-

tion design and cinematography."

As a suggestion for a visual approach to the film, Gruszynski showed Fleming the work of still photographer Jerry N. Uelsmann, who, as the cinematographer describes, "is kind of the Magritte of photography. He creates photo montages — houses with ceilings of clouds or walls with the texture of ivy — combining elements of nature with manmade geometric structures in a surreal manner. Sometimes there are supernatural elements [in his work,] like levitating figures suspended in air — which we do in the film as well, as the girls develop their powers. So that inspired a direction for what we wanted to do.

## The Art of Darkness

Conjuring a visual brew for his modern sorcery tale *The Craft*, cinematographer Alexander Gruszynski finds Kodak's new 5287 film stock to be the ingredient of choice.

by David E. Williams





"Before we started shooting, my initial plan was to use 98, 93, 48 and 87, which had just become available. And like anything new, I wasn't too sure of the 87 and had to run tests to know how extensively I was going to use it. But after the first week I was totally blown away by the 87 and started using it for everything — not just nights, but day exteriors as well. A lot of people are puzzled by 87 and describe it as a circumstantial stock, but I found it phenomenal for all uses.

the treacherous ringleader of a band of wouldbe high school witches, summons the powers of evil. Right: Cinematographer Alexander Gruszynski found that Kodak's new 5287 stock helped him to convey the story's gradually

Below: Nancy

(Fairuza Balk),



Left to right: Rochelle (Rachel True). Sarah (Robin Tunney), Bonnie (Neve Campbell) and Nancy (Balk) gather at the beach to perform a Wiccan ritual. Gruszynski praised the 87 stock's underexposure latitude, which allowed him to pull extra details from shadow areas.

"In the shadows, because of the stock's density curve, the 87 falls off very naturally. It doesn't fall off nearly as fast as 98 and 93 do, because they have more contrast built in. So your gray scale with those stocks is diminished. If you try to create shadows with them and take it just one step too far, you're in total darkness. That means you have to use much more fill than I like to in order to keep your shadows nice and rich. Sometimes if you get on the wrong side of an exposure, you end up with gray, grainy blacks. But I feel that because of the nice curve 87 has, you get much more detail in the shadow. However, if you want it totally black, you don't want the detail; you can adjust and it reproduces black beautifully.

"The results with 87 are similar to the effect you get with flashing, with that subtle pastel quality in the colors. And while it's a very subjective thing, I find it much more pleasing to the eye, and it's a perfect combination with the Zeiss lenses I used [in combination with the Moviecam] on *The Craft*. [The Zeisses] are very sharp, so the softer quality of the 87 worked nicely without sacrificing sharp-

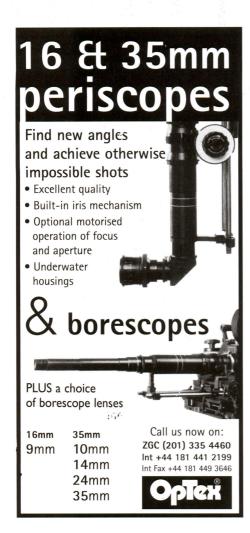
ness [as the use of a filter might have]. The lenses are very contrasty but the stock isn't, which works beautifully.

"It might sound ridiculous, but I also find 87 to be more flattering with women. It just doesn't have the hard edges that the 93 and 98 do. It's still the lighting that matters the most, depending on whether the subject looks better in hard or soft light; the stock isn't going to do the work for you, but I just like the aesthetics of [the look.]"

Gruszynski rated the 87 stock at its recommended speed of 200 ASA, but opened up another quarter stop for the night footage - "the dark stuff." But as he notes, "For the daylight scenes, I just rated it straight, which I felt gave me really beautiful color rendition, especially in the green layer. Foliage, which usually loses detail, is rendered beautifully by the 87. So on really bright day exteriors, where you can't control your contrast and you have a lot of greens, the 87 looks great. Of course, if you have a cloudy day, you'll want to stay away from it because it will go flat. I was generally exposing at about an f8, or an 11 during the day, depending on the sun and the situation."

Commenting on the belief that 5287 should not be overexposed and printed down, Gruszynski offers, "I don't find that [notion] to be substantiated. I've heard people say that they've gotten more grain by overexposing it, which suggests that it works in opposition to other stocks. But I would say that while mid-tones might feel grainier than with 93, the situations I used it for had very few mid-tones to begin with, as they were very contrasty. I had highlights and blacks for the most part. I haven't taken it to extremes, but I personally wouldn't agree to the [overexposure argument] if you use the stock in those situations."

As The Craft is a tale about witches and spells, candles and firelight were common sources and motivation for Gruszynski's lighting in both interior and exterior scenes. "[Those sources] became both a distinct color scheme and direction for how I lit the picture," he explains. "For the fire effects, we built fairly substantial 3' by 3' soft boxes with rather big snoots in front of them so I could direct the light. We set them on a couple of





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To create "movie moonlight" for the film's climax, Gruszynski used incandescent 20Ks with half CTB, diffusing the lights so that the look "wouldn't be too hard, but at the same time not so diffuse that I couldn't create any shadows."

different dimmers and used charlie bars and solid flags to create the flame action, since I don't like the look of flicker generators it's too mechanical and fake. So we used the dimmers, way down low so the color was warm, and some ½ CTO

and Y1 gels. Fire and candlelight are never constant, so the shadows waver, which is an effect we created with the floating bars and flags. You can't do that with just a flicker effect. To supplement candlelight, I would just use soft boxes or a bunch of Chinese lanterns hung from the ceiling."

The 5287's underexposure latitude and "ability to see within shadows" came fully into play during shooting of the film's climax. Much of the picture's black magic action finale takes place within a darkened house, lit only by the moon and occasional flashes of lighting. Says Gruszynski, "Lighting without motivated sources is always the biggest challenge. Your normal sources have been taken away as a story point, and all you have is darkness — so how do you deal with that? Darkness is a great dramatic device, but too much of it can have the opposite effect. It can become monotonous and take the audience out of the story.

"I'm not a big fan of the 'movie moon,' because it's a convention obviously created only for the sake of seeing what's happening at night. Real moonlight is



much more subtle, but in this particular case I was forced to use [fake moon.] Still, I tried to be as subtle as possible. The interior was built onstage, so I used incandescent 20Ks with a half CTB and diffused them so [the look] wouldn't be too hard, but at the same time not so diffuse that I couldn't create any shadows. The entire house was overgrown with foliage of various kinds, so we constantly had the shadows of branches within the house to break up the light.

"When shooting interiors or nighttime scenes, I would build up to an f2.3 or 2.5. But for the night stuff, I am more conservative with the exposure because I want the blacks to be rich and dark. I've found that the 87 gives me that rich, velvety look I like."

Gruszynski adds, "I've recently shot some more tests between 98, 93 and 87 on the film I'm working on now [Bloodstone, for Hong Kong director Ringo Lam], and I've found that while 87 is supposed to be a slower stock than 98, it sees a lot more in the shadows. Of course, there is also a huge difference in grain. On *The Craft*, I ended up shooting all of the night-

## llan Rosenberg on the Arriflex 16 SR3 Camera System.



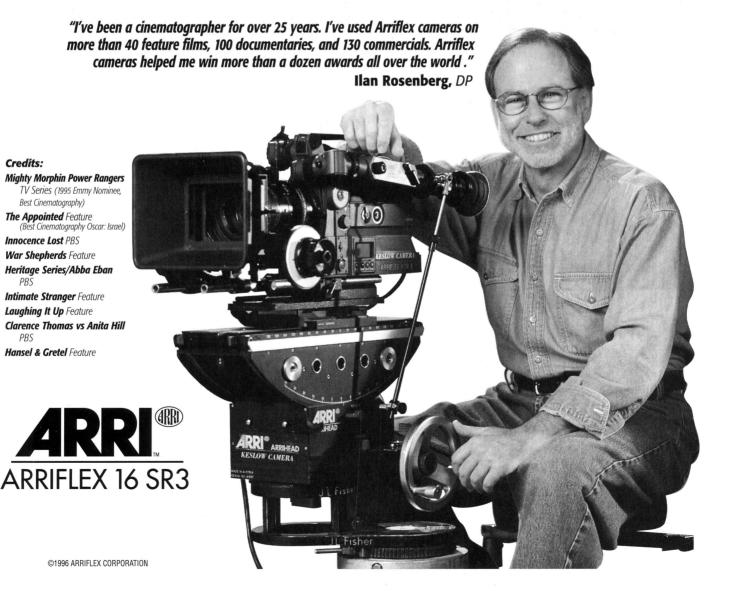
"I've been using the Arriflex 16 SR3 for nearly 3 years on the Power Rangers. Throughout all that time the 16 SR3 has performed flawlessly! It's proven itself versatile and easy to use – really perfect for a TV series.

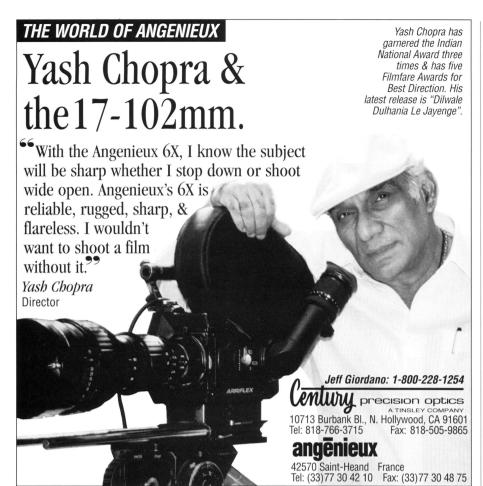
**"Keslow Camera, Inc.** has been providing the 16 SR3 camera system equipment along with very reliable service.

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"Frankly, at the beginning I was skeptical about the viewfinder's built-in exposure meter. However, after working with the 16 SR3 I found the light meter to be very accurate and unobtrusive, I came to rely on it more and more as time went by. It's great for a quick double check and especially helpful with the many odd location setups we have in the Power Rangers series."

## Power tool.







time exteriors and interiors on 87 because I liked its grain structure much better than what I would have gotten with the 98. So if you can build up enough exposure, there's no reason, in my mind, to

"But again, the use of any stock depends on the kind of film you're shooting. Right now I'm shooting a Super 35 picture, so I'm staying away from 98 because you're going right into an optical process and losing a generation, which affects the grain. I'm staying with 87 and 93.

"I'm totally sold on the 87, but the digital effect people who worked on *The Craft* wanted to stay away from it, because they claimed they could get better grain structures for their work with 93 or 48. So for all of our plates, or shots that we knew would need digital work, I used those stocks."

Addressing the perceived reluctance that some cinematographers have had toward 5287, Gruszynski opines, "My colleagues don't seem to be totally sure about it, or they think it has too little contrast. But again, that's a subjective thing. All cinematographers train their eye to know how a stock will respond, so I think what happens to some people using 87 for the first time is that they use too much fill and it goes flat. Sometimes it can be hard to go back and forth between stocks. I've found by shooting 93 and 87 that I have to keep reminding myself that these stocks respond very differently and require different considerations in lighting."

On a humorous note, Gruszynski adds that in the production's quest for authenticity in its depiction of witchcraft, an expert in the field was retained over the course of the shoot. Pat Devin of the Covenant of the Goddess, a high priestess in the Wiccan organization, was called upon for help by the camera department while shooting what were supposed to be exterior rain scenes. The cinematographer recalls with a laugh, "It was difficult as all we had were bright sunny days, so we resorted to using our witch to contact the weather gods. I can't say she helped, but we also kept her in mind for any difficulties we had in exposure and focus."

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#### Chasing the Wind

Director Jan DeBont, ASC and cinematographer Jack Green, ASC track malevolent forces of nature in *Twister*.

by David Wiener



T wister is an action-adventure story about an unusual breed of meteorologists who behave more like Indiana Jones than TV weathermen.

The story (written by Michael Crichton) may be fiction, but these people really do exist. Known as "stormchasers," they run the gamut from serious scientists to thrill-seeking maniacs.

The first stormchaser was probably Dorman Newman, who lived in England during the reign of Charles II. Newman left one of the earliest detailed accounts of severe weather in his "Narrative" of the winter storms that hit the British Isles, Holland and France in 1662. "Histories," Newman said, "are the best explainers of such WhirleWinds, being taken from observations..."

During the turbulence of 1662, 500 trees were blown down in Essex Park and there was great concern over the resulting "bad Vintage" and "scarcity of wine" in France. A woman daring to cross London Bridge "had her Coats blown about her ears. . . and was exposed to the view and laughter

of wiser people." A man in Cambridgeshire was "lifted up into the ayr, and sported with as a feather, then set down upon the ground, upright on his feet to the wonder and amazement of himself and spectators."

Even today, with all of our satellites and high technology, human investigators remain the most reliable means of collecting information on a tornado strike (or "twister") and its aftermath. For that reason, real-life "chasers" play a vital role in the ongoing effort to understand and predict twisters. They also act as a human earlywarning system, tearing through open country and relaying storm updates by radio and cel phone.

The depth of this obsession can be surprising; many stormchasers develop curious attachments to their quarry, treating tornados as if they are sentient beings with personalities. One reallife chaser gave up her job and moved 13,000 miles to live in Guam, the better to hunt typhoons. If one misses her, she tells people the storm "jilted" her.

Other tornado aficionados

sometimes grouse that a storm isn't "mean" enough, an odd complaint when you realize that a "mean one" packs the punch of a onemegaton nuclear blast.

The wildest of the storm-chasers, though, would have to be "core punchers," people who deliberately drive into the heart of a thunderhead where a tornado can lie hidden — a potentially fatal undertaking.

Such adventurers communicate on the Internet and have their own newsletter, *Stormtrack*. Close to 600 foul-weather fans subscribe; even if half are armchair stormchasers, that leaves roughly 300 real chasers, both professional and "recreational."

Twister aspires to give viewers both visceral thrills and some insights into these adventuresome souls. Teaming up to help realize this goal were director Jan DeBont, ASC and cinematographer Jack Green, ASC.

Green joined the largely location-shot production in Iowa after "a lot of really bad weather" had already been endured by the film's crew and original director of

In a startling digital composite, a pair of stormchasing scientists (Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton) try to outrace a killer tornado as it splinters a picket fence.

photography. "I was grateful for that," Green admits. "They'd really had to sweat out a lot of weather problems and delays and even some script problems. All of that had largely been cleared up by the time I got there. I came in after the first 5 ½ weeks of shooting and continued on for the last 12. I believe that they had started location shooting in April [of 1995,] which is the height of the rainy season. On many occasions, production vehicles got stuck in mud bogs and had to be towed out by big rigs. All of those unpredictable circumstances made things very difficult on everyone."

Green is best known for his work on many Clint Eastwood features, earning an Oscar nomination for their bleak Western Unforgiven and an ASC Award nomination for last year's The Bridges of Madison County (see AC August 1995). Twister marks Green's first teaming with DeBont, who debuted as a director on the action blockbuster Speed after directing the photography on hits such as Basic Instinct, The Hunt for Red October and Die Hard.

"Twister is about a group of scientists who have invented an instrument pack they hope to insert into a tornado," DeBont explains. "They want to use the information gathered to develop a whole new warning system."

But the group is not alone. Another team of scientists, with more funding but less honor, tries to beat them to the punch.

"The scientists are extremely competitive," DeBont says. "It's like whoever gets there first wins the Nobel Prize. There's personal and economic gain at stake: grants, renewal of labs, major contributions to their university, a lot of things. There's a lot riding on this because it is a breakthrough that will save lives."

Like the stormchasers they were dramatizing, the film's crew members were constantly on the move. "Jan is a very good director," Green says, "and, like Clint Eastwood, he prefers to move fast. On *Twister*, we had to move fast just because we had so many cameras to set up for each shot."

In addition to struggling with cameras, heavy equipment

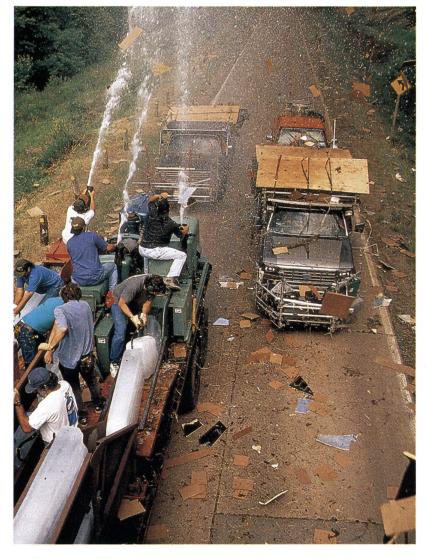
and fierce mechanical special effects, allowances had to be made for computer-generated opticals. "Jan and I both knew that some of the imagery we were filming was going to be enhanced and altered by digital effects later on," Green says.

Effects specialists from Industrial Light and Magic were on the set to make certain the exposed footage would accommodate the computer graphics DeBont had planned. "Whenever we set up any shot that was going to include CG,"



Green says, "we'd get together and talk. It didn't require exposure changes or special filters or anything like that. We'd arrange the composition to allow room for the tornado or for trucks tumbling through the sky or for houses blowing apart. We were never doing the show 'alone' — there were always the as-yet unseen digital effects to be taken into account."

Surprisingly, no computer-controlled camera movements or lock-down shots were made during first-unit scenes destined for CG additions. Everything was done "wild," even the handheld shots. Certainly, Green notes, composition and framing were planned in close collaboration with ILM, but once those allowances were made, "the CG effects would accommodate our movements. That allowed us a lot more freedom and ILM gave us ter-



Top: Cinematographer-turneddirector Jan DeBont, ASC (left) and director of photography Jack Green, ASC talk shop on location in Iowa. Left: Crew members blast a pair of specially rigged camera trucks with artificial hail.

Top: Frightened residents of the heartland brace themselves for the twister's wrath. Bottom: DeBont maps out a scene for his stars.



rific cooperation."

Particularly careful planning was required before filming a handheld shot in a car, during which a CG tornado would ultimately be seen through the windows. "Imagine how difficult it is to make the tornado fit the moving landscape and a jostling handheld image," Green explains. "Working with ILM was great because they wanted to make their system fit us; they didn't want to change our style of photography."

Smaller scenes had their own set of frustrations. Most day exteriors were supposed to take place under stormy skies. But the weather in Oklahoma and Iowa in the middle of summer was dazzlingly clear.

Green had faced a similar situation when he filmed the rainy climax of *The Bridges of Madison County*. Although he had always intended to use artificial rain in that scene, Green had hoped for at least one afternoon of natural overcast. He never got it. Instead, the scene was shot at dusk over three consecutive nights; the foreground lights were constantly dimmed to balance the actors' faces against the slowly darkening background.

On Twister, however, Green did the opposite. "We built up the light on the actors' faces," he says. "We didn't shoot at dusk. There was brilliant sunlight all around, so we put a lot of light on the actors to balance them with the sunny background. Then, the entire image would be brought down and darkened, either by stopping down during filming or later dur-

ing printing. That, along with all And we'd

ing printing. That, along with all the wind machine and rain machine effects, made it look as if the characters were really in stormy weather. Occasionally, we could build an overhang or some kind of shadow rig, but not very often.

"Thank goodness there are dramatic differences in lighting near a tornado, something I found out by looking at actual storm footage," he adds. "You can be in dark clouds in one spot and have bright sun 150 yards away. So I'm hoping the audience might forgive us whenever the light on the actors might be brighter than you'd think a boiling tornado would provide."

This factor became especially important when the film-makers were shooting the actors inside cars which were supposed to be driving through storms, even though the actual conditions were sunny and clear. "Remember," Green points out, "you're carrying this bright background, but dark and cloudy CG images are going to appear in that background. So I had to light the actors up brightly; once the entire image is underex-

posed, everything looks properly dark and dank.

"For example," he continues, "if f16 is the exposure outside in the sun, I'd set the stop at f22. Inside the car, I'd light the actors at f11, making them two stops under. Outside, it's one stop under. Then you print down, and hope that the CG effects will cover up any efforts you might have made to stretch the audience's imagination."

The balancing act forced Green to pour light onto the performers during many day exteriors. For close-ups and two-shots, a 12K HMI "set fairly close" would provide most of the lighting.

throw something over it to soften and fill in the shadows," Green says. "That way, we wouldn't have to worry about the shadows dropping off into pitch black

when the whole

image

"I'd always

brought down. And we'd do whatever we could to keep the actors comfortable."

There was never any attempt to project raindrop patterns onto faces. "We didn't have to," Green says. "We put live rain or live hail on the actors, and later mixed in some CG hail. We had tons of ice and big ice-chippers mounted on trucks to do traveling hail shots. There were also huge jet engines mounted on truck-trailers providing high-velocity wind to blow trees over and flatten stalks of corn. We had to take incredible precautions because we were shooting that stuff car-to-car."

The setups could get impossibly complicated. Imagine a semi hauling a jet engine driving alongside another semi hauling an ice-chipper and gas-powered wind machine, all leading an insert car carrying four cameras, which is towing a car with the actors inside.

"We had four or five cameras rolling on that kind of thing, sometimes more," Green sighs. "Sometimes we'd even have more than one camera vehicle. There could be a pickup truck in front of



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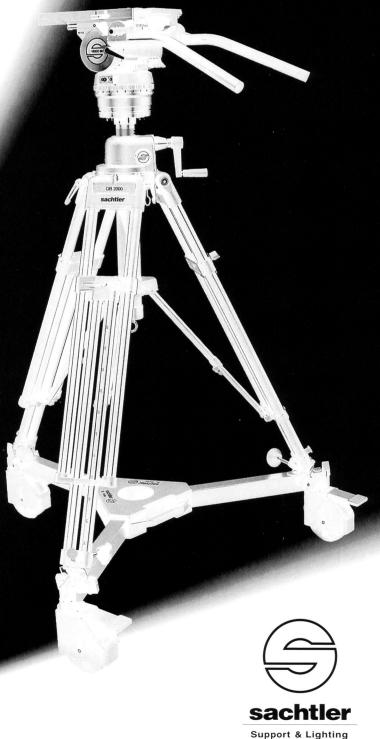
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Above: An 18wheeler is hoisted aloft to achieve one of the film's many hair-raising scenes. Near right: A trio of cameras capture action on the road. Far right: A helicopter outfitted with a Spacecam trails a pickup truck. The Spacecam recently earned its makers a Scientific and Engineering Award from the Academy of **Motion Picture** Arts and

Sciences.



the actors' vehicle with two camand debris would get to the car we eras for wide and tight shots. At the were filming! We had to learn just same time, we'd have an insert car how big to build the shelters driving parallel to the actors with through trial and error. I rememthree cameras in it, filming one ber boxes full of helmets and eve medium shot and two close-ups. shields, and often people would be harnessed into the insert cars. We'd start up a convoy of all those vehicles and it could take a half-"So there was a lot to do mile before everything was up to before we could expose a single frame — first, the safety setup; speed. Then we'd start the ice. And then the debris. I can't tell you how then, the live special-effects rigfrustrating it would get because of ging; then the lighting; and finally

dious."

The production used commercial roads; five miles might be shut down, with a detour put in. Sometimes, it would require two or three takes to get a shot, and moving everything back into position might eat up an hour. "That's why the first take had to be good," Green says. "Of course, with five

the cameras. It got to be really te-

cameras rolling most of the time, you had a good chance at it. We had a good ratio of nabbing solid first takes."

The film's logistical difficulties caused a variety of other technical challenges as well. For example, recording dialogue with jet engines blasting away at the actors was just about impossible. "Any lines spoken during the storm sequences had to be recorded as nothing more than a guide track," Green says. "And many times, you couldn't hear any voices at all on the guide track. There was plenty of ADR work after the show, re-recording everything. It was really the toughest environment I've ever had to try and be creative in.

The film's unique visual requirements called for some clever camerawork, and in many ways dictated the very style of



Twister. "In shots where there was wind and rain, we mounted [spinning-glass] rain deflectors on the cameras, but we didn't have to put a water deflector on the Steadicam. The operator waterproofed the system as best he could, then put on hearing protection, a poncho, a helmet, and did the scene.

"We had an enormous amount of Steadicam, some handheld, and tracking or dollying only when we absolutely had to. When you're running people through a man-made storm with winds of 50 or 60 m.p.h., you just can't use a Steadicam. But most of the time, we could make the Steadicam work under whatever conditions we were filming in.

"I can't remember many shots where we weren't running at least five cameras. During one se-

could go wrong!

the sheer number of things that

provide protection for the people

on the insert cars, what with all that

wind and debris. There were shel-

ters on the insert cars for the opera-

tors and assistants; they also wore

helmets and protective gear. But

we found that if we built great big

shelter structures, none of the ice

"In addition, you have to

FILM

"Because my father is Witold Sobocinski, cinematography has always been an important part of my life. He taught me that the language of film is an interpretation of reality. You have to select what is important from the jumble of images we see in our everyday lives. You can speak without using words by the decisions you make about movement and composition. There is a visual symmetry in The Seventh Room seen in the images reflected in mirrors and in Edith Stein's face. Yellow is the only accent color. When it recurs, it reminds the audience of earlier scenes and emotions. Darkness also plays an important role. When Edith Stein enters the convent, and the door closes behind her, you can't see her face. It's like one of those paintings by the Dutch masters where everything recedes into the depths of absolute black. Later, when Edith enters Auschwitz, the gate of death is pure white. It symbolizes her religious belief and her rebirth. It's a joy to collaborate on a picture like this which has something important to say about the

human spirit."

Piotr Sobocinski won first prize at Camerlmage '95, the International Festival of the Art of Cinematography, in Torun, Poland for *The Seventh Room*. He received an Oscar® nomination in 1994 for *Three Colors: Red*. His other credits include *Dekalog III*, *Dekalog IV*, *Die Wildness* and *Marvin's Room*. His current project is *Ransom*.

nski

Piotr Sobocinski (foreground) is following in the footsteps of his father Witold Sobocinski, one of Poland's most esteemed cinematographers.

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Scenes involving the twister's aftermath provided plenty of work for the production crew.



quence in which large farm buildings are wiped out by the storm, we ran 13 cameras! On a shot in which a gasoline truck explodes, we had between 11 and 13 cameras, including Eyemos and high-speed cameras."

The cinematographer deployed Panavision cameras, both Platinums and Golds, throughout the shoot. "We had some Arriflexes for high speed work, and locked-off Eyemos to get close shots of action without endangering people," he says. "As far as lenses go, we had three sets of Panavision anamorphic lenses. Even if we were just doing a scene with two people talking, we still had five cameras running because of all the live special effects."

With so many cameras rolling, the Green team was cranking out between 10,000 and 20,000 feet of footage each day. "We printed just about everything," he points out, "which made dailies two or three hours long! I'd spotcheck every day, but it was just too tedious to spend all that time viewing everything."

Because of the CG work, that footage would go through many generations. To provide the

finest grain possible, Green chose 5245 for the day exteriors. 5293 was used for day interiors and night scenes, while night exteriors were filmed on 5298.

One particularly interesting night sequence tracks the film's heroes as they travel through a town that has been devastated by a tornado. Recalls Green, "We used a real city, but it was something of a ghost town, so we built additional store and home facades and added a few things to make it look as if it had been active and alive. We had Musco lights and construction emergency lighting units mounted on trailers. We also had two of those emergency units and lit a couple of small areas with them. We added all kinds of flashlights, moving lights, blinking ambulance lights, and car headlights - any kind of source we could think of to make the lighting seem as real as possible."

Another key night scene takes place inside a farmhouse that has been nearly destroyed. There were no practical sources other than a fire engine and similar emergency lights, but all these were located outside the house. Green lit the exterior with a Musco, but in-

side, the only practicals were flashlights.

"The farmhouse interior was done on a set built in an old airplane hangar in Oklahoma," Green says. "We had a couple of little lights pointing into the set through the windows to light up a few areas. The source of that light was supposed to be the emergency lights, along with some light from ambulances. Then we added the flashlights held by the actors, which actually served as our main sources."

When location interiors were filmed, rain and wind machines were constantly hammering on the outside walls. "I don't know if there was a wind machine left in Hollywood," Green says. "We had six gasoline-driven wind machines, three or four electric wind machines, and those two huge jet engines mounted on flatbeds. It was just incredible, trying to imitate what those storms do."

"I've always been enormously intrigued by rough weather," Jan DeBont says. "Lightning, hurricanes and tornados are the most powerful things that happen on this world. And tornados are so random in their destruction.



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They're also incredible to look at, beautiful and devastating at the same time — like in *The Wizard of Oz.* When you look at that tornado, you get mesmerized by it. When I first saw it, I thought it was real."

Both Green and DeBont wanted to give the tornado in their film a living malevolence. As Green says, "It's almost as if it's luring the chasers into a situation where it can kill them. People who chase storms actually feel that tornados have personalities."

To capitalize on this idea, DeBont treated the twister like an actor playing the heavy. "It starts out in the early stages as being a little more magical than deadly," DeBont says. "But very quickly, you find out it's nothing to fool around with; it's a big monster, as big as a mile in diameter, that comes from the sky."

The full power of the tornado is shown in the film's dramatic climax. Green relates, "Our heroes can't escape by truck and they are running away from the funnel. They're chased through some of the most incredible live special effects that I've seen in my entire life. The enemy becomes buildings and fences that are torn up and thrown at them."

Although Green was frustrated by clear weather most of the time, there were two occasions when real tornados made sudden appearances on location. "We had very strict rules about where we could be," Green recalls. "If a tornado was imminent, or if lightning

Large ritter fans are hoisted aloft on cranes to simulate the twister's powerful winds.

was within a mile and a half of us, we had to get under cover — which prevented us from turning the cameras on those two tornados and cranking. But we were able to get some good footage of real funnel clouds that didn't touch ground. You find yourself in this incredible rain where it's hard to breathe; there's just so much water in the air."

"There was a second unit filming as much of the real thing as possible," director DeBont notes, "but they had to keep their distance; a twister can have a forward speed of 60 miles an hour."

On those occasions when a tornado had to be duplicated by ILM, things got very complex. "The tornado is a character," DeBont explains. "You have to direct it and you have to be very specific. Where is it going, what exactly is it going to do, where's the dust going to be, how much debris should we see, how much forward speed should it have? It's very much like directing an actor, really."

Asked if he's ever been caught by a storm in real life, Jack Green thinks for a moment and smiles. "Come to think of it, I've had more than my fair share of severe weather experiences — all during shoots!

"Years ago, I was filming a feature in Hawaii and got caught in a hurricane. I was caught in another one in Acapulco when I was doing a commercial for a cruise line. And when I was a camera operator on *Tex*, a tornado touched down within four or five miles of us while we were shooting an exterior.

"On Twister, one touched down not too far away from us during exterior shooting," he adds. "I guess that's a good amount of storm experience. But I've always been smart enough to avoid that kind of thing on my time off."

"TWISTER" embodies an inventive departure from convention in aerial cinematography. We are pleased and honored that Jan DeBont selected Spacecam\* to capture his aerial visions on this Warner Brother's production.



\*Spacecam Cinematographer, Ron Goodman and film pilot, David Jones

#### Making a Splash

Director of photography Bill Butler, ASC and underwater cinematographer Pete Romano sailed through and plunged beneath the Caribbean waves to tell the tale of a boy and his dolphin in Flipper.

#### by Naomi Pfefferman

 $\Gamma$  T has been two decades since Jaws $oldsymbol{1}$  first cut a swath across the silver screen, and the legendary tales about its difficult production proved that water work does not always go swimmingly for directors of photography. Another Universal film, Waterworld, traversed even stormier seas last year [see AC August 1995]. So it was not surprising that the studio turned to two cinematic masters of the deep for the studio's big-screen version of Flipper, the maritime yarn about a boy who befriends a dolphin.

Topside was director of photography Bill Butler, ASC, whose credits include Jaws, Grease, Biloxi Blues and and several Rocky sequels. His resumé also includes an Academy Award nomination (with Haskell Wexler, ASC) for One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and two Emmys, for the telefilms Raid on Entebbe and A Streetcar Named Desire.

Below the waves was the noted underwater cinematographer and camera designer Pete Romano of HydroFlex, Inc. His photography and award-winning equipment has been showcased in Waterworld, Free Willy, The Abyss and White Squall.

Additional underwater photography was captured by marine photographer Bob Talbot, who contributed some striking wildlife

Butler first got wet behind the ears while working second-unit in support of Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC on the riverbound thriller

Deliverance, and later as the director of photography on Jaws. Both projects were baptisms by fire. The Jaws crew often referred to that shoot as Flaws; the production suffered a case of the cinematic bends that included the sinking of a boat and a problematic animatronic shark that burst its pneumatic hoses and plunged to the bottom of Nantucket Sound.

Despite the hardships he had endured on Jaws, Butler marked the blockbuster's 20th anniversary by tackling the deep once again on Flipper. But he found that this production, too, was hardly smooth sailing. "When you're shooting on water, the challenge is just to make the picture," Butler explains from his Santa Barbara



A trained dolphin. perhaps a bit peeved by the production's occasional use of animatronic replicas, shows off its moves for the crew.

home. "It's an entirely different mindset than shooting on land, where you just take a tripod, throw it in the dirt and do your shot. Where do you put your camera on the water? And how do you cope when you're bouncing back and forth on boats and are in constant danger of getting hurt?"

The logistical dilemmas inherent to a major motion picture involving water and trained animal actors were magnified by the fact that *Flipper* was shot during hurricane season in the Bahamas, a situation that placed the crew in the path of some of nature's most powerful forces. Imagine trying to capture the story of the friendly dolphin while dodging lightning storms amidst metal barges and cranes — or glancing over your shoulder to glimpse a waterspout,



a sea-spawned tornado, spiraling to the clouds.

"You'd see this column of water, knowing that if you got hit, you'd have had it," Butler recalls. "We had a lot of little boats to get us out of there, but we were on a shooting schedule and everyone was scared to death it would be another Waterworld, since we were working for the same studio. So we found overselves looking at this waterspout and wondering, 'Is it gonna come this way, or is it gonna go that way?' Many times we had to turn and run for it, and we could hardly get off the water in time."

When it came time to shoot the film's climax, in which a 14' animatronic hammerhead shark makes trouble, you don't have to guess where Butler got some of his ideas. While shooting the sequence, he utilized a gimballess technique he pioneered on *Jaws*, an idea which initially left Steven Spielberg aghast in 1974.



Butler had his *Flipper* operator handhold the Panavision camera on a boat, using his knees and body as a gimbal to keep much of the ocean's roll out of the picture. He also had the operator handhold the camera in a water box, just above sea level. As in *Jaws*, the low-to-the-water feel enhances the sense that a creature is lurking in the deep.

But for the rest of this film, a comedy-adventure, Butler strove for a look that was virtually the opposite of the seminal Great White thriller. Flipper, after all, is not an epic about he-men hunting an *über*-shark, but the charming tale of a boy discovering a magical world of water. So Butler aimed for pristine blue skies and sparkling, teal-green seas rather than the overcast, low-contrast, waterline look of Jaws.

To take the glare off the ocean and to maximize its lovely color, the cinematographer used a polarizing filter, while Panavision's 11:1 zoom lens allowed him to "go very high and shoot down into the water," providing God's-eye views of the titular mammal's shimmering domain.

Film stocks on the show included Kodak's 5245 to take advantage of abundant daylight; 5297 for low-level daylight and sunny indoors situations; and 5296 for night scenes. "I shot in Super 35 with a common top line because, among other advantages, you don't have to 'pan-and-scan' when you go to 1.85," the cinematographer adds. "And in Super 35, you

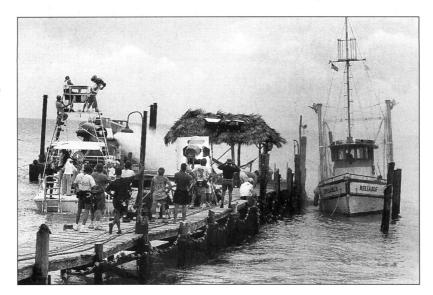
can use standard, faster lenses, which give you a greater depth of field."

All the while, Butler's base was a 100-foot-long, stable ocean barge from which he could extend a 32-foot Lenny arm and remote camera head to shoot scenes on an adjacent picture boat. The modern remote head, which didn't exist when he shot *Jaws*, made Butler's work far easier on *Flipper*. He also benefitted from another subsequent invention: the ultra-bright HMI light, which helped counteract the Caribbean sun.

But Butler is quick to note that even with such improved technology, the basic challenges of lighting on water remain the same. "What you're up against is working with the natural light of the day, and if you have to shoot all day long, you turn your boat and try to keep the sun in the same place as long as you can. The sun is always your key, and there is little you can do to shade or affect that light. On land you can throw up a silk and keep people out of the sun; you can fill their faces with light without blasting them with an enormous, hot light. You can do that to some extent when you're on a boat, if you have room to put up a silk and it's not too wide a shot. Otherwise, you have to throw in an enormous fill light that some people can't tolerate; their eyes just can't take it. Sometimes you can bring in a Griffolyn.

"But there is a trick to working with sunlight on water, as people who shoot Westerns know. Near left: One of Pete Romano's specialized HydroFlex underwater housings is used to capture a close encounter between a young boy and his aquatic pal. Far left: Director of photography Bill Butler, ASC. returned to the sea on the 20th anniversary of his legendary stint as cinematographer of the classic thriller

The camera crew shoots from atop a special platform mounted on a boat. Additional equipment was set up on the nearby dock.



What you do is throw in just enough fill, so you barely get an image in that shadowy area without overlighting it; you don't try to balance it up to the same kind of ratios you would use in a studio."

Butler's lighting arsenal included arcs and HMIs, lamps bright enough to throw illumination from the barge to the picture boat and still work against the glare of the sky. In addition, a powerful Xenon came in handy to simulate the hot edge of the sun on overcast days.

Then there was the dilemma of shooting day-for-night on the ocean, another technique Butler learned on Jaws. On land, of course, "you do what they did in all the Westerns, when they couldn't light huge areas at night: you just keep the sky out of the shot. You take a hillside or something else that has bright sunlight and dark shadows, underexpose it a couple of stops, put a bright light in a window, use a blue filter if you like, and the sunlight will become moonlight.

"But when you get on the ocean, there's no way you can eliminate the sky, because it's half-sky and half-ocean at best. So what you have to do is wait for storms to come by. You only show the part of the sky that is dark on the horizon, and the sunlight overhead gives you a nice light on the water."

Surprisingly, Butler's most challenging shot on *Flipper* lasts well under a minute on screen. Writer-director Alan Shapiro wanted the camera to fol-

low a live dolphin jumping out of the ocean and back down under the sea. "It sounded totally impossible, because there was no existing piece of equipment that would allow us to move the camera with the dolphin, during the shot, above the water and then under the ocean," the cinematographer says. "Our boat would have to race along at the speed of a dolphin, with all of that heavy water rushing against the camera as it rode up and down."

To accomplish the shot, Butler's key grip, Todd Short, and his crew designed and built an ultra-sturdy elevator rig. It enabled the camera to ride on a vertical track, via counterweighted pulleys and lines operated by grips. The rig was attached to the bow of a 25-foot, low barge, which plowed through the water with Romano's Hydroflex underwater camera angled off to one side. A video system allowed the grips to follow the precise movements of the dolphin.

In another action sequence, a fishing boat manned by the bad guys runs over Flipper's pal Sandy (Elijah Wood) in his rubber raft. To simulate the impact from Sandy's point of view, Butler sent a fishing boat on a collision course with an Eyemo camera, which was wrapped in plastic and placed in a specially-devised Styrofoam float. Because Styrofoam is so buoyant, the camera merely bounced out of the way, unscathed.

Butler learned this trick while working on *Deliverance*, when he used an Arriflex camera in

a similar float to bounce halfway down a waterfall. "It's just like shipping something," he quips.

For the *Flipper* collision scene, Butler also used "just about the widest-angle lens I could find" — an exception to his usual rule on the ocean, "where everything tends to be far away from you."

But in this instance, the wide-angle lens added tension and drama to the point-of-view shot: "Looking up at the boat with a 14mm lens made the [vessel] appear larger, closer and faster than it actually was," he explains.

In order to fully exploit the film's oceanic setting, Butler enlisted the aid of underwater expert Romano, who captured the world beneath the waves.

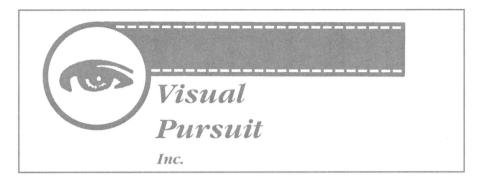
The assignment was tailor-made for Romano, who counts the original *Flipper* and *Sea Hunt* among his favorite childhood TV shows. From his first breath on a regulator while in the military, the cameraman has felt "strangely comfortable" underwater. He recorded dolphin and seal behavior as a Navy underwater photographer and built his first underwater housing, for a GSMO 16mm camera, while working for nature cinematographer Al Giddings in the late 1970s. (Butler also worked with Giddings while shooting the underwater sequences for Damien: Omen 2.)

The GSMO was used to film the award-winning series Mysteries of the Sea. Romano went on to design and construct the Cousteau Society's newest 35mm high-speed underwater camera system, and later shared a 1990 Technical Achievement Academy Award for developing the SeaPar 1200-watt underwater HMI lamp, a safe, portable light which may be used on either wet or dry sets.

Along the way, he experienced some close encounters of a menacing kind. While working as first assistant cameraman/stunt double for the James Bond thriller For Your Eyes Only, Romano thrashed about in the waves as not-so-recently-fed sharks were thrown at his legs, with the hospital on standby alert.

Other career highlights include shooting in a pond under 12 inches of ice for *The Good Son*;

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jumping overboard with a burning stunt double for *Cape Fear;* and being strapped to a 50-foot, miniature submarine that crashed into a rock wall for *The Abyss*.

Over the years, Romano has also perfected the techniques required to film in the briny deep. On one hand, the underwater cinematographer must merely survive, braving factors such as temperature, current, pressure and decompression. On the other, he must grapple with the laws of physics, as water absorbs the long wavelengths of light (the red end) faster than the short wavelengths - meaning that noticeable color loss begins only inches from the surface. In addition, the dome ports common to underwater housings correct for the refraction of light in water, which undergoes the same magnification one sees through a face mask, but increases the lens' focal length by 25 percent.

For Flipper, Romano toted Arriflex cameras encased in his HydroFlex 35-3 deep-water housings, which include interchangeable flat and dome ports. He used Zeiss 14mm, 16mm, 18mm, 25mm and 35mm lenses, staying in the wide-angle range "to eliminate as much of the water column as possible between camera and subject, producing the clearest, sharpest image." With wide-angle lenses he "played the foreground," framing coral and wildlife to create "some of the prettiest dailies of my career."

Romano shot mostly under sunny skies in shallow water to avoid color loss, the hassle of using underwater lights and decompression problems with actor Elijah Wood. Rippling, sunlit water also provided the pristine, alive look required for Flipper's world. Thus, Romano primarily used the sun as his key, with bounce cards for fill or, in deeper water, one 1200-watt HydroPar HMI lamp. He selected an enhancing filter "to give shallow water a crisp, crystal look," and below 15 feet experimented with UR PRO CY filters to help restore color.

"I was also in close contact with Vinnie Hogan, director of operations at Continental Film Labs in Miami," Romano adds. "We shot gray cards at depth at the head of each shot, so the lab would at least know where gray began. We came up with a printer pack that we kept as a constant, which was very successful."

But while Romano needed the sun to show the natural beauty of Flipper's realm, Mother Nature did not always cooperate. "She was a nightmare," recalls the cinematographer, who like Butler often had to sit out storms on the boat. "We had a lot of weather out there, a lot of weather, and the dolphin pens were in jeopardy on some occasions."

Poor visibility and heavy seas meant an initial tug-of-war with the production's powers-thatbe. "They were like, 'We gotta shoot, we gotta shoot, time is passing,' and I said, 'Yeah, but what we're gonna shoot, you're not gonna *like*. Then I showed them what the dailies looked like on overcast days — very flat and blah — and they promptly concurred.

"Because of the currents, we'd also get blown off our [shooting] spots," continues Romano, who meticulously rehearsed each shot with a topside chalkboard session. "We'd have a mass of cables and fins everywhere, and we'd have to drag everything back up current, because we were running out of cable length. If we broke anchor, we knew we'd have a hell of a time trying to get everything back up before the equipment got hurt."

As it turned out, the only casualty of such an accident was the animatronic shark, a 14-footer who, at the time, was making his watery debut. "We were letting him feel his oats, when this rogue squall came out of nowhere and hit us with high winds, heavy seas and rain so fast we didn't have the chance to get everyone out of the water," Romano recalls. "The boat broke its anchor and damaged the hammerhead's umbilical chord, which got wrapped around some coral. That was our first experience with the shark, and it shut him down for a week."

Instead, Romano kept busy with "parts and pieces," such as the "endless" plate shots of animatronic dolphins required for composited shots of schooling Delphinidae. The cinematographer used the blue water as a "blue screen" by filming the creatures from the shallow edge of a drop-off descending thousands of feet.

The animatronic doubles also allowed Romano to film in choice, picture-perfect coral reefs where he could never have taken a live mammal, and they performed tasks the live animals could never have been trained to do. But real dolphins were crucial for scenes requiring the kind of speed and agility the artificial beasts could not provide.

So for a week, for about 20 minutes a day, Romano rolled camera without any film to familiarize the authentic marine mammals with the whirring, white box. The downside of this was that the animals often behaved like "mischievous little children." Romano laments, "They'd dive-bomb the camera, or come by and nibble on my buoyancy compensator, or flip up and come crashing down in front of me. They certainly would not do what they were supposed to be doing. They were hams, too. They'd look right into the lens and sort of snap their mouths, as if they were saying, 'Hi, mom.'"

Though the animatronic Edge Innovations' creatures were state-of-the-art, the electronic animals had their own issues as well. A shark's tail moves from side to side when it swims — rather than up and down like a dolphin's — so Conti's team had to perfect the motion. Four people were required to operate each animal, two on joysticks, one to launch the fish and another to keep it from crashing into the coral. Still others had to prevent the cables from snarling upon the reef.

"We also had to keep the creatures moving constantly, or they would look like what they were: big fake sharks," Romano says. Sunny, shallow water also helped make them look real, since "the light dances on the bottom and adds life to the frame."

The current helped one of the faux sharks scurry along for the climatic scene in which dolphins save Sandy from the hammerhead. Since the shark was larger and heavier, Romano undercranked the camera to 21 fps to give him more speed.

"That sequence was very

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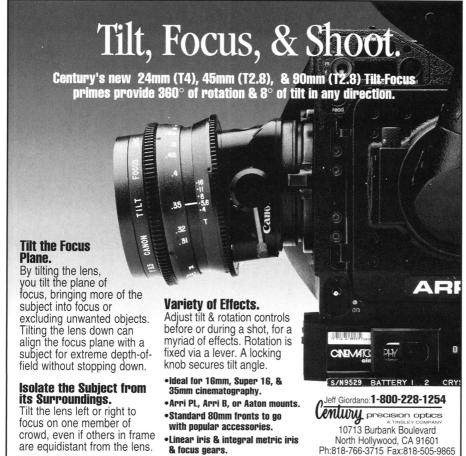
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complicated, because the dolphins were supposed to hit certain points on the shark, and when you're dealing with multiple animatronics, you're dealing with exponential difficulties," says Romano, who hovered in 15 feet of water to shoot the scene. "It was quite frustrating, because again, we were fighting the current. And the sequence came at the tail end of the shoot, when everyone was almost burned out."

Ironically, filming wild sharks proved easier than shooting the animatronic variety. Romano found them in an area where they were often fed by sport divers, so "they were darn near tame," he reports. But safety with the man-eaters was still a consideration. Says the cinematographer, "My theory is, you maintain eye contact, and if they get a little close, you become the aggressor and start swimming towards them."

Critters at the bottom of a 45-foot reef were less cordial. Romano wanted to film the animatronic dolphin with a five-foot-long moray eel, so he gave an assistant the unenviable chore of coaxing the creature out of his hole with a bait fish. Overhead was a 1200-watt HMI with a one-quarter CTO gel, simulating "sunlight coming in from above."

The goal was to capture the eel and the dolphin nose-to-nose, but suddenly a small, juve-nile moray "came out of nowhere" and bit the assistant on the wrist. "He went back to the boat, so suddenly I had to get the darn moray out myself," Romano recalls. "I had the camera in one hand and the bait in the other, when another juvenile eel whipped out and bit me, too. The guy watching the video assist saw the camera flinch, and he said, 'I know what just happened to Pete.'"

Romano finally got the shot, keeping the moray in the foreground with his 18mm lens as the dolphin "swam off into the sunset."

The cameraman is quick to note, however, that eel bites and other risks simply come with the territory. "It's all in a day's work in the water," he concludes.

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Young James endures the malevolent gaze of his mean old aunts, who relax as he trudges through his chores.



UTHOR ROALD DAHL'S CLASSIC  $oldsymbol{A}$ 1961 children's fantasy James and The Giant Peach follows the journey of an enormous fruit as it rolls, floats and flies from England to New York City, carrying within its pit an orphan named James and six oversized, intelligent talking bugs. Directed by Henry Selick, and interpreted by the talented artists and stop-motion animators behind 1993's surprise hit The Nightmare Before Christmas, this screen version of Dahl's tale is a likely contender for the pantheon of great fantasy films.

The expressionistic stylization of Nightmare broke with the traditional stop-motion techniques pioneered by Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen, drawing its approach from producer Tim Burton (who initially illustrated many key scenes and characters) and perhaps some inspiration from George Pal's charming Puppettoons. Director Selick blended flawless stop-motion animation with a Disney cartoonist's penchant for exaggeration to produce something that's daring stylistically — a formula he has taken to new heights for James and the Giant Peach.

"For me, stylization is one of the main attractions of stop-motion," insists Selick, whose memorable MTV promos and award-winning short, *Slow Bob in the Lower Dimensions*, brought him to Burton's attention. "No matter how stylized we make stop-motion in terms of character design, camera angles, camera movements, set designs, color and lighting, there's

still this guaranteed sense of space and shape and gravity. Since we're photographing real 3-D objects and elements, there's no denying that something's really there in front of Disney had different notions.

"There was not a lot of support at Disney for my idea of combination," Selick recalls. "They would have preferred that the film was all stop-motion, but I was in love with the idea of starting live and then going into animation. In the story, the magic was brought into James' life only after he grew the peach. I felt that stop-motion in and of itself was already so fantastic that I wanted to save that magic for when James entered the peach and found the giant intelligent bugs."

Selick won that battle, framing James' stop-motion adventure with a heavily art directed "real world" setting. "Right from the start, I knew I wouldn't have a substantial budget for the live action;" Selick admits. "Since I couldn't afford to build really elaborate sets, I decided to make the live-action environment more

# James and the Giant Peach Grows on the Screen

The creators of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* cultivate another children's classic, further refining the art of stop-motion animation.

#### by Ron Magid

the camera. So why not play with the other things?"

Dahl's novel deliberately juxtaposes the misery of James' life with his nasty aunts with the fantasy he encounters when he escapes inside the giant peach. To enhance this contrast on screen, Selick planned an elaborate liveaction framing device in which James acquires and plants his magical seeds and then watches the growth of the formidable fruit. His entrance into the peach would then be marked with the beginning of the animation. But the folks at

like an opera set. I took the reality at the beginning of the story one step flatter, one step more restricted and made it more forbidding and gray. That way, the animated world would be a better, more dimensional place with more color, almost like [the transition from black-and-white to color in] *The Wizard of Oz.* Plus, it was an approach that could be afforded on the budget!"

"Hiro Lighting"

For the real-world work, Selick brought in cinematographer Hiro Narita, ASC, whose photography on such effects-heavy productions as Honey, I Shrunk The Kids, The Rocketeer and Star Trek VI have made him a fantasy genre favorite. However, before being typecast unjustly as an effects-film cinematographer, Narita had worn many hats. He began his career as one of a team of cinematographers on Martin Scorsese's rockumentary The Last Waltz, then spent two years in Alaska shooting Carroll Ballard's superb Never Cry Wolf, for which he garnered the 1983 National Society of Film Critics Award.

"Before I became known for doing effects movies, all I did the house. Henry really wanted the live-action sets to have a magical quality, a distorted perspective and sense of color, so the live-action would look different from the animation. That enabled me to do a visual stretch, and create a dreamy, fairytale look."

But the stagebound nature of the hillside set, and the stage itself, put limits on Narita's lighting scheme. The cinematographer and his gaffer, Bob Finley, were told that any modification to the hangar was prohibited, leaving them with a set that used virtually all of the available height, and a network of structural beams above that was

more of a hindrance to the lighting than a help. To make matters worse, the script called for action occurring throughout the day.

"The interesting challenge was trying to show all the different times of day on this set," Narita says. "We had early morning, night and afternoon scenes, and of course at each of those times, the color of the lighting had to change. Since we had all of those different lighting schemes on this huge stage set, the problem was how to actually change the lights."

Narita's previous experience helped him to brainstorm a solution. While shooting the South Seas nightclub sequence in *The Rocketeer*, he had hung multiple lighting schemes side by side, then used a pre-programmed computerized dimmer board to recall each setup. He decided to take a similarly theatrical approach to the lighting for this portion of *James and the Giant Peach* as well.

"I again used a computer dimmer board and treated the lighting almost as I would have for a stage play," Narita says. "We had to hang multiple lights — some for daylight, some for night shots, some which could go both ways — and then I pre-programmed each of the different lighting situations. That way, I could go from a day shoot to a night shoot in 20 min-

Left: James and his aunts stare in wonder at the oversized fruit which has begun to sprout in the branches of a tree near their home. Below: Ceilingmounted Chinese lanterns lend a soft glow to a set comprising the giant peach and the hill leading up to the aunts' house.



were movies with kids and animals," Narita says. "Then, after Honey, I Shrunk the Kids, all the scripts I got were for special effects movies! But I recently did a Tales From the Crypt episode called "Showdown" with Richard Donner; a Showtime cable movie called They; and Long Shadows for American Playhouse. I'm also directing a documentary called Paper and Stone about the sculptor Isamu Noguchi."

Selick's opera-style set — depicting the hellish hillside home and garden of James' wicked aunts — was constructed in a Naval hangar on Treasure Island, a manmade islet in the San Francisco Bay. "The set was about 85' wide and 30' high," Narita recalls. "It was a forced-perspective exterior of the house on top of the hill, against a painted sky backdrop. We also had a full scale exterior and interior of



Right: Natalie Roth prepares an 18" peach prop for a highspeed shot of the peach rolling down a spiral hill. On the uppermost section of the hill is a miniature of the live-action set with house and fence Below right: An animated clip from a computer screen shows the peach adrift at sea.



utes. That, of course, forced us to do a lot of pre-rigging. Fortunately, Henry [Selick] had done a great deal of storyboarding, and he was able to do some blocking rehearsals on-set prior to shooting as well. Meanwhile, my crew laid a great deal of cable. Each light or cluster of lights required a separate cable leading to dimmer racks of various capacities, which were then connected to the computer dimmer board. We used a huge number of lights: 46 2K space lights, 26 6K space lights, four 10Ks and dozens of far-cyc and cyc strips. There were additional lights operated from the floor, mostly for fill, which were not part of our prelight scheme, including a 20K on a scaffold we could move around. Anything from the ground we would do on a shot-by-shot basis. All in all, it took two weeks or more to rig, but once we were done, it was easy to go from one setup to another."

In fact, many of the lights Narita used for his night scenes could be given double duty for daylight shots merely by reducing their voltage level to lower their color temperature. "For the night exteriors, I used ½ blue gels then added a few points of blue in the color timing," Narita recalls. "I could use those lights to augment day scenes by warming up the ½ blues, and very few footcandles were lost. I then used different exposures and color timings to accentuate the daylight effect."

While Narita did use Kodak 5293 for a flashback in Red: -22
Green: -61
Bkte: -8
Bkack: 71
Contrast: 0.9, 0.5

which James remembers a wonderful day spent with his parents at the beach, he shot the gloomy hill-side set almost exclusively with 5298, depending on careful lighting to convey the various times of day.

"As we couldn't change the painted backdrop, the clouds were always the same, so we varied its color and intensity, and used a little bit of smoke to give it some depth," he details. "Sometimes we made the background more orange, sometimes less, sometimes white or blue, depending on the time of day. We tried to shoot in story sequence, going from night to day to noon, and we tried to shoot all the night shots together, rather than doing a big costume and makeup change, especially with the aunts. Of course, things are always changing on a set, but with this system, I was able to anticipate those changes. It was a matter of turning a switch!"

Although his live-action footage comprises only half an hour of *James And The Giant Peach*, Narita's cinematography foreshad-

owed much of the magic that was to come in the central stop-motion portion of the film, which was framed later in the picture by more of Narita's work when the peach lands in New York. Conversely, Selick found Narita pushing him to achieve imagery he never expected: "My tendency was to lock the camera down more, but Hiro convinced me, and rightly so, to keep the camera alive, slightly moving here and there in shots. In those more limited sets, it added an extra two percent of energy to things. Now I don't think there's one level camera angle in the liveaction portions; the camera is always a little off-kilter. Hiro really

got into that."

The transition from live action animation was handled cleverly. As the live James crawls inside the peach, his shadow on the wall transforms magically into the silhouette of the animated James. "I just

went for that simple image, and then when he catches his reflection in a mirror, James realizes he's different-looking, too. It was tough for people in Hollywood to accept that much logic, but it actually works well: audiences seem to enjoy that transition." It wasn't the last time Selick's imagination would transform a potential weakness into one of the film's strengths.

Once the peach is cut from its stalk, it rolls down a massive hill, ultimately landing in the ocean. Director of photography/ visual effects supervisor Pete Kozachik, who played a similar role on The Nightmare Before Christmas, oversaw the series of highspeed shots of the peach running rampant through towns, over hill and dale. Though circumstances appeared to demand that Kozachik match his style to Narita's live-action photography, Selick was surprisingly confident in his cinematographers' ability to make a seamless transition. In the end, Kozachik agreed to literally scale down the lights on the miniature hillside to

match Narita's full-scale lighting on-set.

"We built this really good-sized model of the hillside, Kozachik recalls. "It was maybe 16' tall, and the peach was scaled into it at 18." I did a high-speed shot for the sequence in which the Centipede bites the peach off and it rolls down the hill and into the water. Other shots, including all of these little sightgags of the peach rolling through towns but not hitting anything and magically bouncing over a church steeple, were done with motion control. I used 5248 exclusively for the animation photography."

#### **Peach Dwellers**

Unlike *The Nightmare Be- fore Christmas*, which focused largely on the exploits of Jack Skellington and Sally, *James and the Giant Peach* required animating the adventures of the boy and his six insectoid companions: the Spider, a Garbo-esque Eastern European femme fatale; the Ladybug, a pudgy, matronly English nanny;

the Brooklynesque Centipede, who recalls Leo Gorcey of The Bowery Boys; a blind, timid Earthworm; the dapper Grasshopper, an English gentleman down to his monocle; and the reclusive and rarely seen

Glow Worm, who resides in an empty lampshade and serves as a lightsource inside the pit.

The characters were designed by renowned children's book illustrator Lane Smith. Each puppet was handmade from scratch over a metal skeleton or armature fabricated under the keen eve of former ILM animation wizard and current armature supervisor Tom St. Amond (*Dragonslayer*). The custom-made hinge and swivel armatures were set into molds for each character, after which foam latex was injected around the armatures, covering them with a pliable skin. Next, the foam-covered armatures were sent

to the character fabrication department, where a team of artists painted and dressed the puppets.

Since each character must be animated a frame at a time, then shot — with the process repeated 24 times to create a single second onscreen — it could take a week to produce one minute of film. Considering that most of the characters appear in each scene, the animators on James and the Giant Peach were often animating multiple characters with multiple joints, making the simplest shot a long and tedious process. To maximize the number of shots the production could complete in a given week, multiple incarnations of each character were fabricated to accommodate side-by-side shooting on several stages. For example, James alone had 15 bodies and 45 fully armatured heads; each hard plastic skull was dressed with a curly wig and wore one of four basic facial expressions.

But even with a whole lot of animating going on, it took over a year to produce the film's 47 min-



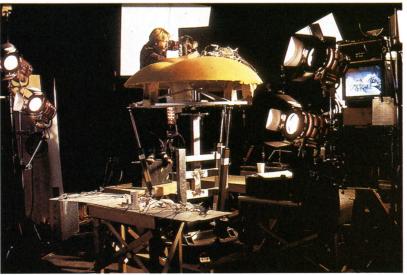
utes of stop-motion footage. The project placed some unusual demands on its director of photography/visual effects supervisor.

"We had to expand out to 24 stages with 24 setups running at the same time," Kozachik marvels. "James was a real squeeze. The message at the beginning was, 'You guys have done one [film like this] already, so we'll cut your schedule.' We had close to 80 weeks on Nightmare, and we ended up doing 64 weeks straight through on James, with only Christmas off! We had something like 25 motion-control rigs manned by eight full-time camera crews and anywhere from 12 to 15 animators going more or less consistently on the show."

#### Lights, Camera, Action

A great deal of time was spent planning the sweeping camera moves that have become the trademark of Selick and Kozachik's work. As Kozachik and his eight camera crews lit the various sets, he and Selick also planned the trajectory of any motion-control moves, which would motivate the camera along its pre-programmed path in sync, frame by frame, with the animation. Meanwhile, the director worked closely with the animators to define the characters' motions and emotions for the scene. Most traditional filmmakers think of their films in sequences or shots when they direct their actors; Selick must think in terms of frames.

"We worked on as many as 20 shots at once, although it was



Top: Inside the peach pit, James chats with his insect friends Because each character had to be animated a frame at a time - with the process repeated 24 times to create a single second onscreen - it could sometimes take a week to produce one minute of film. **Bottom:** Animator Mike Belzer manipulates a tiny James puppet atop a replica of the peach's stem area.

Top: Bill Boes, Natalie Roth, Joel Steiner and Derek Prusak prepare a down-angle shot from the crow's nest of a sunken pirate ship. Bottom: A clip of the centipede standing in the crow's nest.



much more comfortable working on 10 or 12," says Selick. "We blocked out the action, as in a liveaction project, but we used standin puppets. We did a lot of tests: we overlapped lighting tests with camera tests and animation tests. Usually we started with what we called 'pose throughs,' which were just simple poses throughout. Then we did 'pop throughs,' where we actually did a little bit more animation, and lastly a 'final run through,' where we shot the animation on twos [frames] mixed with fours, sometimes with ones, depending on how many frames per second we needed to create the right movement.

"We'd finesse the shots together, because I didn't get to do a lot of takes, and each shot had to fit with the rest of the movie. I spent four or five hours every day working with the animators, and when they were finally launched, they could take anywhere from three days to three weeks on a shot. Then, while they were shooting — and some animators were always shooting — I spent time with the other animators directing other shots."

Photographically, Kozachik tried to treat his animated ensemble as if they were real, but even when shooting real puppets in real miniature sets, multiple passes were often required to achieve the ultimate beauty of each image. On Nightmare Before Christmas, Kozachik and company developed a system of pre-setting separate passes, all of

which were shot one after the other for every frame in which the characters were animated.

"Those were time-consuming to set up, and the animators didn't particularly enjoy standing there and scratching themselves while witnessing a light show every frame as all the lights went off, instruments moved and filters went in," Kozachik states. "We tried to limit that to times when it was truly not repeatable, like when we shot the Glow Worm inside the pit. She's a light source, so we had to give her little tail light special treatment that nothing else in the shot got. We turned the lights out on-set and filmed her glow separately, then did another pass to add some extra diffusion; because she was totally non-repeatable, it had to happen on a 'while you wait' basis."

The peach's craggy pit, the signature setting for James' story, accounts for about 10 of the nearly 50 minutes of animation in the film, including two epic dance numbers.

Several pit interiors, measuring 8' tall from floor to ceiling, were carved with a hot wire out of Styrofoam, so different shots could be done simultaneously.

"We enriched it with a lot of interesting visual material, like garden tools that had somehow been left outside, and old buttons and coins that might've been lost in the dirt and then swept up inside, where they've grown huge," Selick details. "The floor consists of a sundial we see earlier in the garden. But it is a pit, an enclosed space with an odd shape and only so much floor room. Shooting in it wasn't harder than other things we've done, but it was a bit re-

strictive."

A d d s Kozachik, "The whole art department, including our art directors, Bill Boes and Kendal Cronkhite, and production designer Harley Jessup and me, got together with Henry on the design to decide what we

could do to make this not look like a brown peach pit for those 10 minutes. The pit was one place that got a lot of different lighting designs. The Glow Worm was supposed to be the primary light source, but she was the one I tried to shy away from most because the aesthetics weren't too great. I was really concerned that we'd end up with this 'overhead pool hall' look. However, the Glow Worm was especially effective in a spooky sequence where James first meets the characters and doesn't know who or what they are; we just see them as shadows or silhouettes with glowing eyes.

"To avoid using the Glow Worm all the time, we decided to make the inside of the pit pitted, because I could hide recessed lights in those crags. When the sets were roughed out, I marked places where I wanted holes drilled so we could shoot lights through to create a glow, then I crossed my fingers and hoped it would actually work! We designed a neutral daytime

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#### "Peach Cam" Brings a Little New Technology to an Old Technique

by Richard Bennett

During the planning of James and the Giant Peach, cinematographer Pete Kozachik demanded some new technology to streamline the animation and shooting process. He outlined a series of modifications to Skellington Productions' workhorse Mitchell GC rackover cameras. His goal was to reduce the amount of handling the cameras were subjected to as each shot progressed. This meant automating or eliminating the Mitchell rackover viewfinder mechanism, and incorporating some type of videotape which would allow the animators to view the progressing shot on video playback.

As Pete and I discussed the project, it became clear that the production couldn't afford a rotating mirror reflex conversion. The photographic team felt that a pellicle mirror reflex was inappropriate for this

shooting environment.

While working at Universal Studios' Hartland Facility, I had designed a camera that used a moving beam splitter reflex system. For the Hartland camera, the pellicle beam splitter made the most sense. It's inexpensive, small, gives flicker-free viewing and can be moved into and out of the light path fairly easily. I unearthed drawings for the Hartland camera, and began working with some ideas for a conversion that would have a moving first surface mirror for the main reflex mirror. The moving mirror concept would make cost-effective use of the original Mitchell viewfinder door, ground-glass assembly and eyepiece.

What I proposed to Pete was the removal of the rack-over "L" bases from Skellington's cameras, and mounting a nose piece to the face of the actual Mitchell. The nose piece would house the following: the Nikon mount; the moving reflex mirror; a cam and track mechanism (that moves and registers the reflex mirror); mirror position sensors; the ground glass and field lens assemblies; optics to relay the image to the black-andwhite video tape as well as the existing Mitchell viewfinder. The nose piece would also have the plugs and connectors needed to interface with the camera controller.

After the basic engineering was completed, an open frame prototype was built after three and a half weeks. It let me analyze how well the moving parts did their job and which of them needed to be further refined. Meanwhile, I had an optical engineer spec out the new ground glass, relay lens, prism and mirror positions. This let the reflex optics work with the original Mitchell view tube and the new CCD tap. The completed CAD program and engineering drawings were sent to several machine shops for fabrication a few days later.

The "Peach Cam," as I named it, was now a real piece of equipment. In the end, without its lens, motor, or mag, the camera specked out at twelve inches long, eight inches wide and seven inches tall.

The system uses a dovetail track, which is machined into the nose piece. The dovetail guides the reflex mirror into and out of the taking lens light path. A cam moves an over-center locking arm that locks the main reflex mirror into the proper position for view finding or imaging. A small servo motor, mounted to the face of the nose piece, drives the cam through a set of gears. Micro-switches tell the camera controller when the mirror is in the correct position. A movable prism relays 100% of the ground-glass image to the video camera. When the video tap prism is moved out of the light path, the total light bundle is relayed to the Mitchell's viewfinder and eyepiece. The Nikon mount is fastened to an adjustable lens board which was set and pinned to match Academy center. To save money we used the original Mitchell ground glass, field lens and housing, all of which were modified. Finally, a new base plate that incorporates a set of Iris Rod sockets and two sets of camera tie-down holes (one on optical center, and one on camera center) is fastened to the bottom of the camera body.

With these modifications, Cinema Engineering brought some new technology to the venerable art of stop-motion animation, and the Peach Cam brought James and the Giant Peach to life with a little more ease.

look, with peach-colored light coming through the cracks, plus some extra peach fill, to simulate sunlight filtering through the peach into the pit, which looked nice. For contrast, we gave the night look a surprising blue moonlight feel, as in the scene where the Spider puts James to bed as a little candle sputters just out of frame."

But the overhead units were mostly window dressing. "The real lighting was happening with not particularly motivated but nice-looking special units for the characters," Kozachik reveals. "We had Inkies in, on or over the set, often on motorized dimmers. which were used constantly on almost every stage. Aside from doing dramatic lighting changes, we used the dimmers to do the practical problem-solving stuff familiar to most live-action crews, who always have someone dimming up a light or moving it in real time. In our case, if we wanted to see light on a character's face as he turned around, but not on the back of his head, the animator would precisely time the dimmer to dim up the lights. We also tracked lights around the set frame by frame. That's just another use for a motion control pan-tilt head: put a light on it. We used a lot of strategically placed mirrors to bounce light into places when we couldn't get an actual unit into the set — and they all had to be locked down tight so they wouldn't move while the animation was going on. The pit sets didn't support lighting units well because they were just Styrofoam, so a lot of gridwork came from outside the set. We had a serious amount of grip-ology!"

Two song and dance numbers are staged inside the pit: "The Eating Song" and "That's The Life." The latter, which takes place at night, just after James has met the insects, was the more complex undertaking. Kozachik and company let their imaginations run wild, expecting the audience to accept fantastic, patently unreal lighting as the various characters sing about their aspirations in an attempt to embolden themselves for the perilous journey to New York.

"We were able to get some really nice lighting treatment that had little or nothing to do with

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Near right: James gazes down upon Manhattan after the peach has been speared atop the Empire State Building. Far right: Shipwrecked in the Arctic, James and the Spider pick their way across cracking ice floes. This scene was executed by combining front projection with live water elements.



logic or reality, because we were dealing with songs," Kozachik says. "There's a lot of stuff that's highly derivative of MGM musicals. There's a shot where the camera's pulling back as the characters stick their faces in close, one from the left, another from the right, and they each sing their short little line. We even did a Donald O'Connor-style running-up-thewall shot with the Centipede! 'That's the Life' ramps up into this really fun production number in which the sundial becomes a translucent, lighted circular dance floor. The floor finally blossoms into various colors depending on the characters themselves, and it's really beautiful. At the end, they get into a sort of chorus line, but it's not quite like the Rockettes!

"We came up with a signature color [on the dial] for each character. When the Grasshopper's dancing with a top hat and cane, a great white spotlight follows him and the whole set dims. In the group shots, we tried really hard to keep the colors separate. We tried to maintain the logic that somehow the Glow Worm, who's always up in the attic, is the spotlight and can change color at will, but at one point there are four or five spotlight beams on the characters in different colors! I hope that nobody watching really cares! If I had allowed a light source you barely even see in-frame drive the way the whole show looked, it would have been like the tail wagging the dog."

The spotlight beams themselves were double-exposed

(or DX'd) in the camera by Dave Hanks, the operator on that sequence. Hanks backwound the exposed film and shot a piece of cardboard artwork on the same motion-control rig that cast the original light, creating a "spotlight beam shooting through smoke" effect. Haze, rain, falling snow and other atmospheric effects were also DX'd in-camera, a risky technique but standard operating procedure in stop-motion animation.

#### **Extra Effects**

For all of the effects that couldn't be added in-camera, Selick decided to take the timehonored stop-motion tradition of James and the Giant Peach into the ultra-high-tech realm of digital effects. All told, between 300 to 400 composite shots matted the peach in the water or flying through the sky above the clouds. The bulk of the digital work was handled by Dorne Hubler at Buena Vista Visual Effects, who set up on-site workstations hooked up via T1 line to the Burbank facility. Shots tweaked in the Bay Area could then be filmed out in L.A.

Scott Anderson of Sony Imageworks supervised the CG water animation. Anderson also orchestrated an attack on the peach by a "shark," a fanciful 19th-century Jules Verne-style submarine made of riveted metal, created via a hybrid of puppet textures and CG animation. Budget dictated that the dozens of 6'-diameter peach sets that the puppets worked on were shot as much as possible against a

painted sky background, and against bluescreen only when water would also be added. Consequently, the peach was shown bobbing in the CG ocean in only a very few establishing shots.

"Every time we did a bluescreen shot," Kozachik grins, "we had to make the case for why we couldn't have done it with a practical painted backing. When the show started, we really weren't ready to start shooting, and the only thing we knew for sure was that there was going to be a peach with bugs on it! So we started shooting exteriors of the peach against a painted backing for the sequence where our heroes discover that they're out on the ocean. We used multiple sets which were sliced into halves or thirds for manageability and perched on a gimbal we copied from photos of the one used in True Lies. I'll tell you, there was nothing so unpopular among all the camera operators as shooting bluescreen peaches!"



The peach eventually drifts off-course into the Arctic, which production designer Jessup visualized as a Sargasso sea of half-sunken ships, the masts of which form a bizarre cityscape. The Centipede, who's navigated our heroes there, realizes that he needs a compass to get back on-course, so he dives into the water to search amid the graveyard of ships.

"He ends up in what we call 'the underwater adventure," Kozachik reveals, "which provided a great opportunity for us to get off the peach. When dead sailors come to life down there, a couple of our other characters head into the water to rescue the Centipede. We used a lot of lighting and various tricks you might expect from the early 20th Century to achieve the underwater look: ripple glass, shards of light, and a lot of double-exposed process bubbles. There were also a couple things we didn't



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At the end of the tale, James takes up residence in a charming home fashioned from the peach pit.

do by choice, like adding a lot of particle matter as an underwater cue, because Henry felt that the Arctic should have cold, clear water without a lot of stuff floating in it. We used ultraviolet lights down there too, specifically for the skeletons, as we had done for Oogie Boogie in Nightmare. In this case, we only used UV to emphasize the skeletons and make them a little bit otherworldly, but the set was lit normally. We just put those 4' blacklight tubes, which people used to use to illuminate hippie posters, everywhere; the only things that actually fluoresced were the puppets and objects we painted with UV paint."

Throughout his adventures, James is been pursued by the terrifying image of the rhinoceros that flattened his parents and made him an orphan. While the charging rhino may or may not be a figment of James' imagination, it undoubtedly gives rise to some of the most powerful imagery in the film.

"The storm sequence at the end, where James finds his strength, is one of my favorite things in the movie," Kozachik says. "We decided to make James' nemesis not too literally a rhinoceros but more of a nightmare vision, like the Samurai in *Brazil*. The rhino charges out of the cloud at James, who tries to shout it down. James was on top of the peach and the peach was on the gimbal, which our camera operators, particularly Eric Swenson, used to create powerful buffeting movements, choreographed to the practical lightning flashes which were supposedly shooting from the rhinoceros' horn. We used every means I could think of to put these shots together because of budget and time. Predominately, the peach was shot against bluescreen, but we also used some [Ray] Harryhausen-style, frame-ata-time front- and rear-projection.

"Gary Platek, who's like Mr. Cloud Tank, created these really wonderful storm backgrounds, a vortex of stormy clouds and a foggy cloud blanket covering the city, in a humongous cloud tank in his private studio space. Gary's crew made the mechanical rhinoceros, which was about 16" long. It was dressed in a black spandex outfit, galloped like a horse, and could be filmed practically underwater, where it looked like a silhouette of a rhino in the clouds. Paint squirted from his nostrils as if he was blowing steam out of them."

#### The Big Apple

After vanquishing the rhino and conquering his fears, James and the peach fall out of the nighttime sky, landing atop the Empire State Building, where James transforms back into a real boy. "It's almost like waking up from a dream," Selick says. "He stands up and becomes a real boy. Then the real James steps out into a New York that's not like the city in travel brochures, but more like the world he left: black-and-white, flat sets, with a more limited look."

James arrives in the blackand-white New York of Busby Berkeley's 42nd Street, a huge multiplane miniature replete with miniature vehicles, combined with a full-scale live-action foreground, all of which became the province of Hiro Narita. The cameraman's training as a graphic artist enabled him to sharply contrast the angular rigidity of New York with the grim chaos of the aunts' hillside home and the bright fantasy of James' adventures aboard the giant peach. "Henry didn't want it to make the New York street set look obviously like a miniature," Narita explains. "He wanted it to look real but not real — stylized."

The problem Narita faced was lighting the layered miniature background so as not to betray its scale or the forced perspective. "I've always felt that miniature sets should be lit like the real big set, literally scaling down the lights,' he says. "In this case, my concept was that the further away each setpiece was from the camera, the smaller the light source would be. We created layers of lighting, and we had to darken as the set receded; if the intensity was the same, the set would look flat. We didn't use the dimmer board: instead, we hung lights and their intensity was controlled by using different kinds of fixtures and scrims. We used lots of small units — 1Ks and 2Ks, and sometimes even smaller ones. We also used a little bit of smoke in the background to diffuse the shot and give it some depth, which was very tricky, because you can't control the depth of smoke and it can come into the foreground."

The peach is dropped onto the Empire State Building, after which the gargantuan fruit is lowered to the street by a huge crane. "We built just a section of the giant crane, and matched it to a real truck we brought onstage," Narita says. "Since we were pretending that the sequence took place at midnight, rather than using store lights to illuminate the foreground, I used streetlights as the real James was welcomed by the crowd."

James and the Giant Peach emerges as that rarity among adaptations: a film that is equal to its literary source. Throughout the two-year odyssey it took to bring the book to the screen, Henry Selick, Hiro Narita, Pete Kozachik and a slew of talented artisans and animators reinvented Roald Dahl's classic book in countless imaginative ways. Or, as Kozachik modestly concludes, "I think we've managed to stay true to the spirit of the story."

NEW DIMENSION HAS BEEN ADDED A to the hybrid world of digital film. It will soon be possible to shoot film, scan and record it into a digital format and add any combination of the most popular Tiffen optical filters at a computer workstation. The company's first software release, under the Crystal Image banner, precisely matches 86 of Tiffen's standard color (red, green, blue, magenta, etc.), warming, cooling, coral and custom filters. They plan to roll out software emulating their optical diffusion and contrast reduction filter sets, including ProMist and SoftFX, before the end of the year.

"We believe this software will give cinematographers tre-

mendous creative freedom and unbounded flexibility," says Steve Tiffen, president and CEO of the company. "They will be able to experiment with different looks in an interactive environment at computer workstations. For example, they can create

precise split-diffusion filters which will enable them to soften the image of an actress' face and make her look more glamorous without affecting the rest of the frame. They'll be able to make scenes warmer or cooler, and add different colors to establish the mood or augment the story."

Tiffen emphasizes that these are just a few random examples of what the system can do. He believes that the possibilities for using digital filters are literally endless.

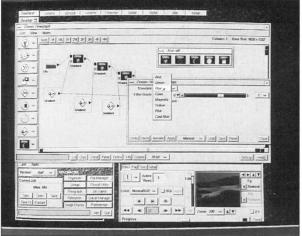
"It's a new way of thinking," he explains. "Cinematographers will shoot make-up tests with a naked lens on the camera. They'll then be able to add various combinations of filters until they find exactly the right look. They can bring the director and actors into the digital suite and show them various looks in an interactive environment. The computer

#### Enhancing the Palette

Tiffen's revolutionary new digital filter system promises a new world of creative options for cinematographers.

#### by Bob Fisher

screen is fine-tuned to simulate the accuracy of a film screening room, so what they see on the monitor is what they'll get on film. This makes film even more pliable and malleable and I'm sure cinematographers will experiment and invent ways to use this technology."



The Tiffen Digital Division is a relatively new wing of the optical filter

The Tiffen system's on-screen computer display offers a variety of control options.

company, which was founded in 1938, and is headed by senior vice president Marty Ollstein, a director/cinematographer who conceived the idea while he was teaching a film class about the use of optical filters and gels. Ollstein brought his concept to Tiffen and Kodak because he believed that the two companies would appreciate the importance of maintaining a film aesthetic in digital postproduction.

"I'd had some hands-on experience with image processing using Silicon Graphics computers, and it occurred to me over a period of time that it was possible to build a bridge linking the two separate worlds of film and computers," Ollstein says.

Tiffen's Crystal Image software, developed for exclusive use with Kodak's Cineon digital film system, was a collaborative effort. The Cineon system includes high-resolution digital film scanners and recorders which provide a seamless gateway into and out of digital postproduction, image retouching and compositing software — all operated on Silicon Graphics computer platforms.

Carlo Hume, a senior software development engineer and product manager for Kodak, says the Tiffen filter software has great potential for solving communication problems. "It creates a common language for enhancing communications between cinematographers and digital artists," he explains. "A Tiffen tobacco filter, grade one, two, or three, has the same name whether it is optical or digital. How many stories have you heard about cinematographers getting calls from digital facilities where the colorist asks, 'How warm or how blue should this scene be?' It's a subjective question which leaves the cinematographer vulnerable to misinterpretation by the colorist or digital artist."

Hume also points out that the digital software can be more exact or subtle than off-the-shelf optical filters. The workstation operator can slice the difference between grade one and two filters into 100 equal intermediate parts, and select the one which is optimal for a particular look or scene — maybe it's a grade 1.44. That data can be used as a blueprint for manufacturing custom optical filters for the film camera.

Hume notes that implementation of the Crystal Image software is no different from any other node in the Cineon palette. A developer's toolkit enables third parties to develop special-purpose

software that plugs seamlessly into the system. "Crystal Image can be used in conjunction with other Cineon software," Hume says. "I've coined a new term — digi-log — which is a merging of digital and analog. We put a lot of time and effort into developing an environment where you can interact with the computer in the same way at any facility where our system is used."

Ollstein notes that there are practical benefits to using the new digital tools. For example, there is no need for the cinematographer to compensate for the transmission of light through a filter pack. "This can sometimes provide the edge you need to shoot a scene in difficult lighting without degrading the sharpness of the image by stacking filters on the camera lens," he says. "You can add filtration in a digital film suite and get the best of both worlds. It isn't necessary to preview every frame. You simply select a key frame to start on, and also the last key frame. The computer will interpolate the rest, or you can animate filtration changes within the shot."

Tiffen and Kodak recently tested the concept when they invited some 18 cinematographers for a hands-on experience in a digital suite. The group worked with film scenes photographed by Ollstein and scanned into a digital format. Scott Grodner of Digital Nation, a veteran digital artist, was their interface with the computer.

"This is simply a very efficient way for cinematographers to take their know-how, their eye, and their language and bring it into the digital postproduction process in an environment where they are calling the shots," Grodner says. "There was a scene where some of the cinematographers participating in this demonstration wanted to make the skin tones on one actor warmer without affecting other parts of the image. Every one of them had their own way of doing it. There is no formula for artistic interpretation."

Grodner adds, "You'll get frame-to-frame consistency in image quality, because the software is very specific. If you add a coral grade one filter, it's going to give you the same look every time. The Kodak digital film system is capable of scanning, manipulating and recording all of the subtleties in colors and tonality captured on the negative."

Grodner notes that a single frame of 35mm color negative film converted to a digital format with a high-resolution scanner can require between 10 and 100 megabytes of data for an accurate digital representation.

Îra Tiffen, senior vice president of research and development, points out, "The computer gives you immediate visual feedback. You can select any density and any combination of filters. You can choose to use a dozen digital filters, and it won't degrade the image. That won't make you more intuitive, but it will enable you to test different combinations of filters. You'll have more choices, and that will allow you to be more artful. If you are on a location scouting trip, you are likely to rely on the filters you are most familiar with or happen to have in your case. Now, you can try hundreds of combinations of filters at a previsualization workstation until you find the right combination of grades and hues to take with you on location."

However, he says, it's impossible to predict how soon this digital film technology will become the norm. Tiffen points out that the fax machine was invented decades before it became an everyday tool for communications. He notes that the questions that must be asked before implementing any new technology are usually the same: how great is the need, and how soon will it be affordable and widely available?

Conrad Hall, ASC was among the cinematographers who previewed the digital film software when it was unveiled a few months ago. "It takes the visual art a step forward," he says. "There is a whole new world of possibilities for creating new negatives which represent exactly what you want. If you have a good match between the original negative and the images you are creating in postproduction [so they can intercut seamlessly,] you have the opportunity to create more magic."

Theo Van de Sande, ASC

says that he leans toward the use of combinations of color grades for diffusion. He believes that the digital software could become a useful tool for previewing. "I've shot period films where I made my own nets," he says. "I've spent weeks coloring stockings in different grades of brown for diffusion. I always thought of it as part of the job, like choosing a stock and deciding how to expose it. Now, you can preview what [the combinations] will look like, and have custom filters made. It's an absolutely fantastic tool. It gives us new possibilities for building layers of diffusion and previsualizing a look."

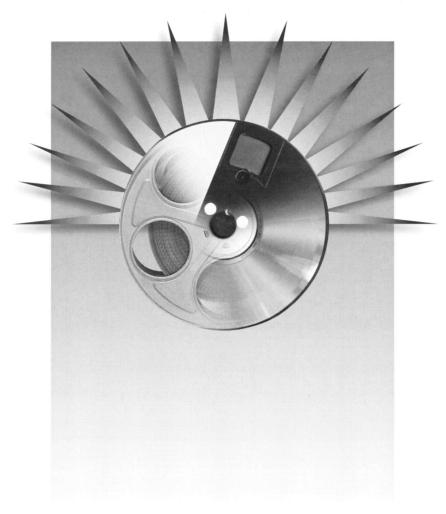
Fred Elmes, ASC sees the new system as an opportunity to improve on perfection. He believes it is a significant breakthrough mainly because the accessibility of the technology will draw cinematographers deeper into the digital film postproduction process. "One of the things I like about this idea is that you can take a real sunset and make it even more dramatic," he says. "It's another way of giving me more control over what I captured on film. I can go into a scene and alter just one element very selectively.

Dean Cundey, ASC points out that the language of film is expressed in subjective terms, such as subtle colors and the softness of light. He feels that a common terminology for describing these subjective terms will help bridge the gap in communications between filmmakers and computer people working in postproduction. "If this tool becomes easily accessible for previsualization, you could shoot stills at locations and scan them into the computer before you decide what to put into your filter pack," he says. "It could also be a useful tool [to clarify what you want] in postproduction. [Currently] if you just tell the digital artist you want a "warmer look," what you get depends upon how they interpret warmer: you can get red instead of yellow, or yellow instead of coral."

Visual effects veteran Richard Yuricich, ASC brings a different perspective to the issue. "This is 1,000 times more efficient," he says. "It gives you absolute precision. There are things I'll be able

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to do in hours which probably would have taken days or weeks. I think it will take some time for the concept of previsualization to take hold. In the beginning, some people may find the technology intimidating, or the costs a bit high."

Rob Legato, a visual effects/TV commercial director at Digital Domain, observes that digital filtration could be a boon for matching background plates filmed on location to the live-action film shot by the first-unit cinematographer.

Mikael Salomon, ASC believes that the opportunity to add filtration in postproduction will provide opportunities to create effects which were previously impossible or impractical. "For practical applications, I can visualize using this tool to match elements of scenes," he says. "It's an important step for cinematographers, because it draws them deeper into postproduction. I think we had better jump [into the digital age] or we're going to be left behind."

Curtis Clark, ASC adds, "This is an implementation of the concept of the cinematographer as a co-author of the film and an opportunity for us to protect the photographic integrity of our work."

Woody Omens, ASC believes that digital film will become a powerful interpretive tool for cinematographers. "We can create and interpret colors in ways that no one has seen before. This presents an entirely new concept in color management for motion pictures. I can see it redefining the role of the cinematographer. Up until now, digital film has mainly been a tool controlled by people working in postproduction. Now, the same person who created the images can finish the job. It empowers the cinematographer to make the artistic decisions. It's like having your hands on the keyboard of the computer, which I think is what will ultimately happen. We'll become more self-sufficient."

Sandi Sissel, ASC is also intrigued by the idea of having a common language for speaking with colorists and digital artists, but she also raises a point of concern. "I think previsualization is a wonderful way for cinematogra-

phers to communicate with the producers, director and actors during screen tests," she says. "I'm happy to see Tiffen involved because of the common vocabulary we can all have. But it's terrifying in some ways, because it makes you realize how little control you actually have in the long run. Anyone can decide to alter your images in postproduction. They can remove the filters you used and add other ones."

George Spiro Dibie, ASC characterizes digital film as another tool that cinematographers can use to enhance their work and also to correct problems that can occur on location — for example, if there is an unexpected shift in the weather. "It's a beautiful tool if it is used correctly by the right people," he says, "but it is very important that the cinematographer is present [during the post process.] That's the only worry I have. But you can't stand in the way of progress. This [system] begins to bridge the gap between film origination and digital postproduction, and there will be more tools like this coming in the future."

Aaron Schneider won a 1996 ASC Outstanding Achievement Award for his work on the television series Murder One. Most of his prior experience was in TV commercials, where digital film postproduction is the rule rather than the exception. "I was blown away by the possibilities presented by this system," he says, "but I am waiting for the day when it becomes practical to scan an entire feature film so you can interpret the images in digital postproduction. This technology gives us the power to manipulate images with filters way beyond what we can achieve during original photography. It will affect the way we think about planning visual concepts."

Schneider believes that previsualization could make an immediate impact on the way commercials are filmed. "You might take still images of a car and scan them into the computer, then show people from the ad agency the creative options on the monitor. It enables you to communicate with images instead of words. You could experiment with colors on

a very gradated scale, and then Tiffen would customize those filters for you. I could take the color palette that a production designer comes up with, input it into the computer and customize a filter palette in reverse to previsualize how the designer's choice of colors will be affected by different combinations of filters. I can also see the possibility of using the computer to do things like extending a sunset to cover a three-minute scene."

Bob Primes, ASC offers his own vote of approval. "The thing that I find most intriguing is that this system was designed for cinematographers. It gives us a common vocabulary for communicating with the people in the digital suites. It also gives us more time to experiment and to be more creative because we can explore the options at a workstation. It's going to be the way everybody works in the future."

Allen Daviau, ASC points out that "putting the Tiffen filter algorithms into the computer allows us to start with references to tools with which we are already familiar. Instead of starting from scratch with reds, greens and blues, we can begin with a precise nomenclature that we have used for years on the soundstage and on location. [The Tiffen system] facilitates a cinematographer's communications regarding filtration, whether [that filtration] is being applied optically during shooting or digitally during postproduction."

Summing up the system's advantages, Brian J. Reynolds suggests that a proper use of the new tools will help cinematographers maintain their status as a valued link in the artistic chain. "I think producers are going to respect the idea that a cinematographer isn't just a guy who shows up with his light meter and camera and exposes the film," he says. "I believe they will accept the idea that we should follow through and keep a certain amount of control over our images."

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#### Big Moments on the Small Screen

#### The 10th Annual ASC Awards fete celebrates visual eloquence in the 4:3 proscenium.

#### by Chris Probst

On February 25, the ASC held its 10th Annual Outstanding Achievement Awards for Cinematography at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. As always, AC 's intrepid staffers were on the scene — in formal wear, of course — to salute the nominees in both the feature film and television categories. In this month's issue, we offer detailed profiles of this year's television nominees; the feature cinematographers will discuss their work in our upcoming June issue.

This year's batch of ASC Award-nominated work for television spanned the gamut of scope, subject, style and theme. But each of the 14 undaunted nominees transcended the limitations of the medium, celebrated the spirits of ingenuity and endurance, and achieved visual excellence.

#### **Regular Series**

Aaron Schneider Murder One "Chapter Four" ASC Award Winner

While studying mechanical engineering at Iowa State University, Aaron Schneider gradually realized that he was dedicating himself to a career in which he had almost no interest. Rather than stick out his course of study, he left the school to enroll in the cinematography program at USC.

His timing couldn't have been better. Schneider happened to enroll at the school when Panavision and Technicolor, in conjunction with USC, were launching the workshop seminar series "Reflections," which invited internationally-renowned cinematographers to re-create lighting setups from their own films. Exten-

sive coverage on the series also graced the pages of *American Cinematographer* under the same title.

Comments Schneider, "These legendary cinematographers would come in, talk about [their work] and then light a scene from one of their famous movies. I was fascinated by them — and especially by the fact that they were really the craftsmen of these wonderful films that I had grown to love. While everyone else was getting bitten by the directing bug, I became fascinated with the concept of cinematography, which seemed to be this cool blend of both art and science — the behavior of emulsion, lenses, and the properties of light. So I started to shoot everybody's projects while they were competing to direct."

Following his graduation, Schneider landed a low-budget straight-to-video feature. "I thought I had hit the big time!" he says. "But when the film wrapped, I found myself in a wasteland with no work. Luckily, my naiveté and stubbornness made me say, 'I'm a cameraman,' and I held out for anything and everything that I could photograph. Over time I built a reel and occasionally put some money into it by shooting a spec commercial. Finally, I got the attention of an agency which took me on, and I built a career in commercials and music videos."

It was Schneider's impressive reel that caught the eye of director and former *Hill Street Blues* cast member Charles Haid, who was gearing up to direct the pilot for producer Steven Bochco's new courtroom drama, *Murder One*. "The producers were interested in creating a show that didn't look like what people were used to seeing on television," reveals Schneider. "They wanted me to

find a way to render a television story with a more cinematic approach — a more refined, detailed and crafted approach. Whether it meant incredibly contrasty photography that sometimes put performances in shadow, or a camera approach that meant directors had to sacrifice coverage in the name of a higher-quality image, that philosophy was supported all the way up and down the line. I am very proud that I was able follow through with that original intent in the 10 episodes I photographed.

"With the rigorous pace of television," he continues, "you have to be planning, designing and thinking every minute. We tried to prevent formula from leading the way. We followed spontaneity, which again works directly against television and is one of the things of which I'm most proud. We never let a scene get photographed [in the usual style of] master, over, over, tighter, tighter. We always tried to find a way to punctuate a scene visually in ways we are used to seeing in theatrical movies."

At the outset, Schneider and Haid discussed the looks of several dramatic feature films as possible models for Murder One. The foreboding style of Gordon Willis, ASC in the Godfather trilogy, and Conrad Hall, ASC's "magical naturalism" in Searching for Bobby Fischer, served as possible starting points in devising a look for the show. "Bobby Fischer was our main blueprint," Schneider reveals. "I used some of the philosophies both technical and cerebral — that Conrad Hall developed for that movie. I particularly liked the idea of firing little pieces of very crispy, hot light into a scene to create a very strong sense of contrast, and then using bounce light for fill. [This approach] not only made [the



lighting] seem more natural, but also gave it a softer look — even though with bounced light and a high ASA [shooting with Eastman Kodak's PrimeTime 640T], we were trying to shoot wide open. A lot of times, if I didn't have time to light to a T2 or a T1.9, I would throw an ND behind the lens and open it up to a T1.9. This way, the focus sort of gently falls wherever you want it — it's not crisp. I think your eye accepts a certain amount of information that is out of focus. But what's neat about [a shallow depth of field] is that as things graduate from slightly out of focus to in focus, it sort of gently rocks people's eyes into where you want them to look, as opposed to something obnoxious like a crisp field of

wide open.

"Conrad Hall, Jr. operated on *Murder One*, and I was plugging him for every little bit of information I could get about his father. I was surprised to find out that Conrad Hall [Sr.] has the same attitude towards lighting that I do: he doesn't light the people, he lights the space around the people and lets that light inspire the last step,

focus or deep-focus where the eye

can wander wherever it wants to. I

like how gentle the lenses look

which is the faces. He may start in the background with a window or a piece of light that's fighting its way into the room. Then as a grip pans a flag across the room, or an electrician strikes a light that's in the wrong position — which might cause a piece of light bounce off the floor and suddenly come to life he'll use that moment to inspire the final product. If you look at Bobby Fischer, there's light that's specifically placed in areas, but none of those areas are actually the subject of the shot. That's one way I think he gets an un-lit looking image. When you light a room without concerning yourself about lighting the people, by the time you're finished, you have what it takes to expose the face, and the face doesn't look lit — it looks organic to the shot."

Laughing, Schneider continues, "We picked our backgrounds first on *Murder One* and drove the directors nuts! We'd set up the shot, ask if they liked the size, mark the actors and then send the first team away. Then we'd bring the second team in and say, 'Stand out of the way for a second,' and move the camera a foot to the right or the left — or up or down — until we had a piece of a window,

a lampshade, or a highlight on a desk. After that we'd bring the actors in and see how their faces fell into place relative to the background. Finally, we'd light the faces so that they were complementary in terms of alternating shades of gray with the background. The directors would look at me and ask, 'What are you doing moving the camera around without any actors in the frame?'"

The nominated episode, "Chapter Four," was selected by Schneider for both technical and personal reasons. "I chose that one because there's a final scene between the two main characters that's really intense," he offers. "[The episode presented] a unique opportunity that you don't get very often in television — to take incredible acting and writing and do what cinematographers love to do, which is to create a subtext of our own. It was such a strongly written and performed scene that I was really able to sink my teeth into it and contribute to it with my photography. In television that's sometimes tough to do. But here was an opportunity to take stateof-the-art writing and wonderful performances, and build on them with cinematography."

both television and feature cinematographers gathered for the annual Nominees Dinner at the ASC Clubhouse in Hollywood. First row, left to right: Awards Co-Chairman Owen Roizman. ASC: Sven Nykvist, ASC; Henri Alekan; Douglas Trumbull; Edward J. Pei; and Ron Garcia. Second row: Jack Green, ASC; John Bartley, CSC; Dean Cundey, ASC; Kenneth Zunder, ASC; Paul Elliott; Ivan Sarossy (father of nominee Paul Sarossy, CSC); and agent Jennifer Lyne (standing in for Darius Khondii. AFC). Back row: agent Debbie Hausseler (standing in for Phedon Papamichael); John Toll, ASC; Eastman Kodak Regional Business General Manager and Vice President Fred Franzwa; Stephen Goldblatt, ASC; Aaron Schneider; ASC **President Victor** J. Kemper; Brian Reynolds; and Awards Chairman Burton "Bud"

An impressive assemblage of

Stone.



John S. Bartley, CSC *The X-Files* "731"

"I think the third season is better than ever," offers *The X-Files*' Canadian cinematographer John S. Bartley, CSC, who has photographed every episode of the acclaimed Fox series except the pilot. Bartley credits the show's writers and executive producer Chris Carter for providing him with a unique narrative canvas on which to paint some of television's most risky images — images which have earned him a prior ASC Award nomination (in 1994 for the episode "Duane Barry"), as well as Emmy consideration (in 1995 for his work on the episode "One Breath").

Bartley began his career in film as a rental house manager, and freelanced during weekends as a gaffer on commercials, music videos and trailers. After leaving the rental business to gaff full-time on features, he worked with cinematographers John Lindley, Frank Tidy, BSC and Sven Nykvist, ASC. His first feature as director of photography was the sci-fi film Beyond the Stars; he later moved into television and photographed the series Booker and The Commish, as well as the pilots for *Outlaw* and *Both Sides* of the Street.

Wanting to create variety within *The X-Files'* established look, Bartley has incorporated the use of rich colors and flamboyant design into his lighting. "If I read a script and find some element that we can accentuate with color," he reveals, "I'll then talk with David Tickell, my gaffer, and we'll perhaps try out a new color that we've discovered in a swatch-book. It keeps things interesting and makes for a better show. I try to make each episode a little different, but they all still have that 'X-Files' look.

"I started using Tiffen's SoftFX filter this year," he adds. "I'm not using the ProMist quite so much anymore. I used to use it to smooth out skin-tones or if I had a particular highlight that I wanted to burn out, but now I'm tending toward the SoftFX. I like it a lot better. It really smoothes the faces out, especially after the actors have been shooting for 14 hours."

The nominated episode,

"731," offered viewers a scope not often seen for a one-hour dramatic series — featuring complex and terrifying stunts, expansive locations submerged in the show's requisite noir lighting, enormous pyrotechnic explosions and, of course, little green men. "'731' was the second half of a two-part episode," Bartley submits. "That episode had good production values, great acting and an excellent script. Graeme Murray, the production designer, went all-out creating the interior train carriages, and we had a lot of second-unit shots of the exteriors of the trains."

Later in the episode, Agent Scully, one of the FBI leads, is chased through the forest by a blinding light in the sky — which turns out to be the searchlight of an army helicopter rather than that of an extraterrestrial vehicle. "We had a 4K Xenon mounted on a Giraffe crane for that," Bartley explains. "We moved it through the forest and had huge fans going in the background to create the wind effects."

Bartley and the show's producers continue to stretch the traditional boundaries of primetime entertainment. "I recently did a test with night-vision goggles," he notes with satisfaction. "They're amazing for seeing in the dark; we mounted them onto the matte-box and shot through them. I like that I can come up with an idea and say, 'Let's try this!' If it doesn't work, we simply won't do it again."

### Rick Bota

Tales From the Crypt "You Murderer"

Like many contemporary cinematographers, Rick Bota developed an interest in photography at an early age, shooting black-andwhite stills and developing them in his own darkroom. "Growing up in the Midwest, it really wasn't an option to become a photographer," laments Bota. "So when I went to school at the University of Michigan, I got a degree in biology rather than pursuing a career in film. But I was active in the film society and public-access television, and I even shot a few student films while earning my degree."

After graduating, Bota

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postponed medical school and worked at a rental facility in order to acquire the skills necessary to become a camera assistant. In 1982, after landing a job as a second assistant on *Beverly Hills Cop*—which was shooting locally in Detroit—Bota knew he wanted to pursue a career in cinematography, and within two years he moved to California and became a first A.C.

In 1987, he was operating on the Fox series *Werewolf* when the director of photography left to begin another project. Bota was selected to take over. "I shot a season before the show was canceled," he recounts. "I then went back to operating because I still considered myself an operator and wanted to further my skills. I didn't actually make the move to director of photography again until 1991, when I started HBO's *Tales from the Crypt*."

The tongue-in-cheek anthology horror series presented Bota with a unique opportunity to experiment with a myriad of cinematographic situations on a weekly basis. "Every episode was like a little mini-feature, and we tried to treat each as such," he explains. "There were all kinds of visual possibilities. We were only limited by the cable standards on HBO, so I tried to mix things up. We did episodes with lots of color and episodes where we pulled the color out and desaturated it. We did episodes with general color hues: orange shows, blue shows and green shows. We even tried to do a black-and-white installment, but they didn't like that.

"Still," he notes, "on every episode we had the freedom to follow that particular director's vision. On a network series, there's a look for the show and you have to continue on with it. But on *Tales from the Crypt*, each episode had its own unique look. So it's been a great experience and has certainly accelerated my career by allowing me to do a lot of things that I normally would not have been allowed to do on television."

The nominated episode, "You Murderer," was a significant achievement for Bota because, for the first time, he was able to work with one of cinema's all-time greats: Humphrey Bogart. "[Execu-

tive producer] Robert Zemeckis directed the episode and had the distinct vision that it should be shot through this 'actor's' point of view; the only time we see that it's actually Humphrey Bogart's perspective is when we see his reflection. I did all of the operating on the episode — which was completely handheld — and I also had to wear Bogart's wardrobe. Every time Bogart appears in the show, it's actually my feet, my hands and my shirt you see!"

Shots that integrated a reflection of Bogart's visage were achieved by Industrial Light and Magic through the use of CGI. Says Bota, "I relied heavily on Ken Ralston at ILM to allow Humphrey Bogart to star in this episode — Bogart even got a credit at the beginning."

The complexities of creating the episode included the fact that the show was designed to simulate one continuous half-hour take. "We had tremendously long takes and virtually no cuts — you don't have any cuts in a person's point of view," notes Bota. "From the standpoint of cinematography, 'You Murderer' is a series of a dozen really long shots that seem to go on forever — there are a few six-minute shots that covered the full 360 degrees of the sets. That meant I had to light the sets practically, since they all had ceilings, floors and four walls. The production designer and I worked together to come up with a lighting scheme that amplified all of the light fixtures."

Bota photographed 3 ½ seasons of *Tales From the Crypt* for HBO, and also shot a feature film based on the series, *Demon Knight*, for Universal. His other feature credits include *Under Siege 2: Dark Territory* and the upcoming Pamela Anderson actioner, *Barb Wire*. Bota is currently shooting *The Glimmer Man*, which stars Steven Seagal.

Brian J. Reynolds N.Y.P.D Blue "Heavin' Can Wait"

Brian J. Reynolds is no stranger to the television medium, and has received three prior ASC Award nominations for his efforts. The first was for the pilot of *Civil* 





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Tel: 212-219-8408 Fax: 212-219-8953 Wars, followed by two nominations for his work on *N.Y.P.D. Blue* (1993's "Oscar Meyer Wiener" episode and 1994's "You Bet Your Life," which was also nominated for an Emmy Award).

Reynolds began his career in television by photographing the pilot for *The Danger Team*, and then worked on the series *Sisters* before taking over *N.Y.P.D. Blue* in the middle of the first season. Reynolds has also ventured into features with *Guarding Tess* and *Jezebel's Kiss*.

"Heavin' Can Wait" was selected from the current season of N.Y.P.D. Blue — which marks Reynolds' third year working on the Steven Bochco-produced series. "I think what's happening in [shooting] film for television right now is that we're in the middle of this 'industrial revolution' of digital manipulation capabilities and equipment," opines Reynolds. "[The craft of cinematography] now extends into the realm of postproduction. We've been given a lot more control on the postproduction end, so the job of a television cinematographer is not just limited to showing up with a light meter and getting the day's work done. It's more about developing a look and trying to create something that's fresh and unique while also trying to compete visually with what's there between our shows: the commercials! We have to get a look that's as enticing as the six or seven 30-second spots that appear before, during and after the show. That means keeping up with the technical aspects of what you can do with telecine, digital effects and the new methods of editing. You can shoot differently now. On N.Y.P.D. Blue we do a lot more angles and different coverage because we know that the editors are using Avids and will have time to see all of the material. Before nonlinear editing, you'd shoot a closeup and a couple of masters which the editors used to hang in a trim bin. You'd be lucky if they actually had the time to view the material that you'd done on the set.

"Because of [our editing abilities] on *N.Y.P.D. Blue*, we're far more aware that some of the snippets — like a quick little tilt-down to someone tapping a pencil — are

going to be used to create the visual interest that we strive for on the show."

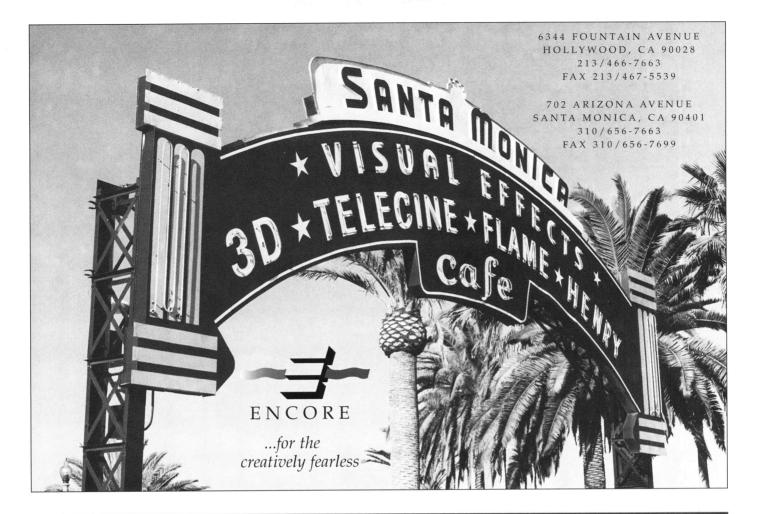
Kenneth D. Zunder, ASC Chicago Hope "Leave of Absence"

Shooting for the television series Chicago Hope has presented cinematographer Kenneth Zunder, ASC with a sanctuary of sorts. "To me, a good television show can be as fulfilling as a good movie," says Zunder, who has now earned four ASC Award nominations and an Emmy nomination for his efforts in the broadcast medium. "The scope may not be as grand," he attests, "but that doesn't mean that I put any less care into the work. You have a chance to work with a number of different directors, which makes your approach to a character, a scene, or a set slightly different each time out."

Zunder studied art history at Harvard and earned a master's degree in documentary filmmaking from Stanford University before receiving an apprenticeship as a camera assistant through a program sponsored by the International Photographer's Guild. After assisting such directors of photography as Laszlo Kovacs, ASC. Bobby Liu, ASC, Philip Lathrop, ASC and Michael Chapman, ASC, he became an operator for Robert Primes, ASC on thirtysomething, where he remained until 1989, when he was promoted to director of photography on the series. He won a 1990 ASC Award for his work on an episode titled "The Go-Between."

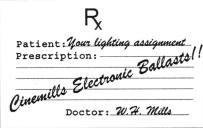
Zunder also received ASC nominations for the next two series he worked on: *Brooklyn Bridge* in 1992 ("The Immigrant") and *seaQuest DSV* in 1993 (for the series pilot). He was also nominated for an Emmy this year for the *seaQuest* episode "Such Great Patience." His feature credits include *Bye Bye Love* and *It Takes Two*.

Of his work for the critically-lauded *Chicago Hope*, Zunder says, "Part of the look of the show is dictated by the sets. We have sets like the nurse's stations that have fluorescents built into the architecture, and there's only so much you can do with them. But we also have









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a lot of scenes that take place in the patients' rooms and the doctors' offices. Those sets naturally lend themselves to different moods in lighting because they're open to light coming in through windows. We can play warm sunlight, snow, rain, cool-winter light, or nighttime lit with practicals.

"I shoot on Kodak's Prime-Time 640T, which I rate between 400 and 500 ASA," he elaborates. "The stock has an incredible amount of latitude. In the operating room, for instance, we often have practical operating lights [in the shots.] I'll expose for the faces, which read anywhere from a T2.8 to a T4.0, but I'll read up to a T22 out of the operating lights. The PrimeTime just doesn't blow out at all. It holds highlights and overexposes better than anything else.

"I vary the focal lengths a lot," he adds. "In the operating room where the action is immediate, energetic and life-threatening, I like to be close and wide. I try to vary the perspective in accordance with the sets, the story and the characters. We do a lot of dollying around the hospital — which most people think is Steadicam — but fortunately the producers built the sets so we could dolly through almost three stages' worth of sets. I like to mix the walk-and-talks with different focal lengths. It depends on what story you're trying to tell. If you want to capture the energy of moving, go with a 24mm lens dollying back. If you want to isolate the characters, use a 150mm lens from further back."

Zunder trusts the story to inspire his visual decisions. "The better the script, the better I can make my work. I chose 'Leave of Absence' [as an ASC Award submission] because I felt it was one of the better scripts this year. It offered a wide variety of looks which I felt were typical of the year's work, and it was one of the stronger stories emotionally."

MOW or Pilot

Paul Elliott
Truman
ASC Award Winner

Paul Elliott's ASC Award for *Truman* marks his first triumph

after two prior nominations. He was previously nominated in 1992 for *Citizen Cohn*, which also received a Cable ACE Award nomination, and in 1994 for *And the Band Played On*.

A native of London, Elliott began his career as a still photographer. After attending the London Film School, he shot a number of documentaries. Upon relocating to the U.S., he earned the 1988 U.S. Film Festival's Best Cinematography Award for his work on Rachel *River* and then earned a Cable ACE Award nomination for an episode of Tales From the Crypt. His other credits include The Piano Lesson and the features My Girl, My Girl 2 and Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael. Elliott recently completed principal photography on the Showtime movie Riot, which recounts the 1992 Los Angeles riots via four interlinked stories, each depicted by a director of a different ethnicity.

"I've shot a number of films for television and the cinema," says Elliott, "and I don't see a big difference between shooting for either one. You just have to make more compromises on television films because of the time allotted. On *Truman* we had something like 36 days. Any feature of that length would have probably had a 65-day schedule.

"I'm always interested in doing period films," he says. "On films involving different eras, there are a number of ways to achieve a period feel. On Truman I wanted to find a different color palette. I experimented with different film stocks and selected Kodak's 5287, which they call a variable-contrast stock. It has a different contrast range depending upon the ASA at which you rate it. There was something I liked about that behavior for this movie. I wanted to have a low-contrast stock and then light the film in a more contrasty way. I tested the film at different ASA ratings and found that rating it at 400 gave me the look I wanted. Also, I wanted to shift the color balance by shooting through different filters. I tested various filters and decided to shoot through an 80B — a blue filter. By shooting at 400 ASA through the 80B, but having the lab trying to time it back to normal, I

was able to achieve more muted colors. The entire movie, save for the night exteriors, was shot on 87 with the 80B. I liked what that approach did to the blues and the browns, and I felt that it gave the film a look for that period."

Working to create featurefilm scope within the confines of tight scheduling, Elliott was faced with pulling off the near-impossible. "On the HBO movies," he submits, "they treat the film more like a feature project in terms of the production design, scope and acting. But there are still some difficult challenges. One scene in the movie is a World War I battle sequence at night in the rain. Because of the scheduling, that scene was shot on the first day. To create the battlefield, we brought in a rain machine, and there were explosions, stunts and horses running all over. This was basically planned for one night of shooting — which is pretty impossible — but we did it in a day and a half. Had Truman been a feature, the battlefield would have been bigger, the effects would have been more elaborate, and we would have had maybe five days to do it."

# **David Franco**Falling for You

As a youth in France, David Franco dreamed of becoming a globetrotting photojournalist "covering wars and big crises around the world." By the age of 13, he was following his father around Africa snapping photographs, and he soon developed a fascination with light. After his family moved to Montreal, Franco studied at the University of Quebec and then began shooting music videos, eventually compiling nearly 200 credits.

"I got lucky, because music videos were pushed very hard [in Canada,]" Franco admits. "I got to shoot a lot of them as a director of photography, so I was able skip the assistant part and get a lot of experience very fast. That's where I learned the craft. Being able to expose so many feet of film in so many different situations gave me a big advantage as far as confidence was concerned."

Franco was previously

nominated for an ASC Award in 1994 for his work on the mini-series *Million Dollar Babies*. His resumé also includes the features *I Love a Man in Uniform* (which won the 1993 Best Cinematography Award at the Festival of Valladolid in Spain), *Soul Survivor*, *The Carpenter*, and the MOW *Model By Day*. He is currently shooting the feature film *Jackals*.

"There are more guidelines shooting for television," Franco offers, "but I don't think I light any differently [than for a feature.] On Falling For You, I tried to keep the look as clean as possible, and not flashy. We had many long moves and one-shot takes, because we were trying to keep the dynamic in the film without resorting to cuts. Falling for You is a very urban story that takes place mostly at night in and around the city, so we kept with the natural feel of city lights."

Reflecting upon his profession, Franco says, "I think cinematography is an amazing craft, and if you can bring something more to a picture, it's great — that's what you're striving for all of the time."

# Ron Garcia, ASC Divas

Before taking up camerawork, Ron Garcia, ASC was an electro-mechanical engineer. He gained international recognition with his eye-grabbing images on David Lynch's controversial television series Twin Peaks. His work on the provocative pilot earned him a 1990 ASC Award. In 1993, he earned both ASC and Emmy nominations for Murder in the Heartland — Part 1. His other credits include the films El Diablo (which won a 1991 Cable ACE Award), Nightbreaker, Storyville, the theatrical Twin Peaks prequel Fire Walk With Me, as well as the episodic police shows *Hunter* and Crime Story. He also recently completed shooting *The Great White* Hype for director Reginald Hudlin, and is currently photographing the pilot Texas Graces for Warner Bros.

"On a television schedule, you're always trying to get ten pounds [of material] into a two-pound bag," Garcia muses. "Divas

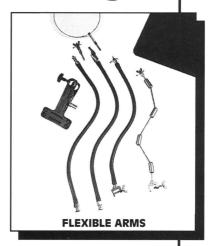
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2 Central St • PO Box 200 Rockport, ME 04856 Phone: 207-236-8581 • Fax: 207-236-2558 is about a songwriter, a kid who's always hustling and trying to get record producers into a nightclub so that he can get his songs published. The club doesn't have a lot of money, so they use junk or 'objects de art' to try to make their stage design look good. Production designer Larry Bennet did an incredible job of dressing the set to give it that feeling. I tried to augment the look by using very few lights in a creative way. I actually only used four main lights. I had three Intelli-beam lights in the front hitting the singers, and I used another one as a backlight. I also had some Par cans on the back of the stage with different colored gels in them.

"The schedule was so tight that [the performers] were rehearsing while we were shooting, so I never saw a rehearsal. I hung my four lights, and 20 minutes before we had to shoot I saw the actual choreography of the show. Thomas Carter, the director, said, 'Here's the act,' and we watched the four singers do their song-and-dance routine. When the actors went away to get changed, I sat there with the programmer and the gaffer and said, 'Okay, here's what we're going to do.' We really had to work on the spur of the moment, but that lent itself to instant creativity — I was influenced by the music and the dancers."

Garcia notes that new postproduction tools for television dictate techniques that are distinctly different from his approach to features. "Television is much more forgiving on your lighting schemes because of telecine postproduction control and the use of the daVinci," he states. "It now allows you to lessen your concerns about balancing color temperatures because that can be corrected [in post.] I just finished a course on daVinci timing and it's quite a powerful machine. If you have a high luminance range from a window, if something is too bright, or if there's a color temperature imbalance between your outside and inside lights, it can be easily controlled in telecine. But on film you don't have that kind of control; you have to balance your lighting, gel the windows, or put more gel on the lamps inside. You have to pay a lot more attention to lighting detail, and the control of those details, when you're shooting a feature film."

**Alexander Gruszynski**Kingfish: A Story of
Huey P. Long

In addition to his ASC Award nomination, first-time nominee Alexander Gruszynski also earned this year's Cable ACE Award for his photography on Kingfish: A Story of Huey P. Long. Born and raised in Poland, the cinematographer attended film school in Copenhagen, Denmark, where he began his career shooting documentaries. He then worked on feature films in Scandinavia before moving to the United States in 1985. Since then, he has gotten steady work on a combination of films for both the small and large screens. His television credits include Cast a Deadly Spell, The Women of Brewster Place and By Dawn's Early Light, while his feature credits include Tremors, The Pagemaster, I Like It Like That (which earned him a 1995 IFP Spirit Award nomination) Threesome, Angus and the upcoming witchcraft spooker, The Craft (see separate story on page 30). His latest project is the Jean-Claude Van Damme film *Bloodstone*, which is being directed by Hong Kong action maven Ringo Lam.

Although he has done work for both television and features, Gruszynski is an unabashed supporter of big-screen presentation. "Television is an ungrateful medium for a cinematographer," he states. "You never see your images on the screen larger than life. I think as cinematographers we're more attracted to a large screen as opposed to television. Plus, the schedules are so grueling. It's really hard to create anything of quality in such a short schedule.

"In terms of approach, it's the size of the image that in a way determines your visual style. A very wide establishing shot with a large vista of architectural detail might be very powerful [on a big screen,] but it is reduced basically down to nothing on a television. So dramatically, you have to stay closer to the subject matter, your

protagonist. In terms of cinematic narration, the drama has to be larger than life when you're shooting for television."

Besides facing the standard tension inherent to television during the shooting of Kingfish, the production had an extra crutch to contend with. "It was a period piece that takes place in New Orleans, Louisiana in the Thirties," Gruszynski explains. "With period films, you have the added challenge of getting rid of anything contemporary that might be in the frame — you dress your backgrounds, you get rid of contemporary cars and you're aware of airplanes or any other element that would distract the viewer's attention and ruin the illusion. When you shoot a contemporary drama, you just take advantage of whatever background you have and basically point the camera there and shoot it.

"However, we did have a clear approach to the way the movie was shot. The story is about the governor of Louisiana, whose ambitions were larger than life even though he was a small figure in the political arena. So our approach visually was to use deepfocus, wide-angle lenses. We'd bring [actor John Goodman's] position closer to the lens to get a certain amount of distortion and make him look bigger."

Gruszynski stresses the need for simplicity and spontaneity while working in television, stating, "I feel that my initial experience in documentaries has helped me with my work on television films, because [documentaries] show you that there are other solutions available. You learn to be flexible and creative on the spur of the moment. Otherwise, you fall hopelessly behind schedule."

# Phedon Papamichael White Dwarf (pilot)

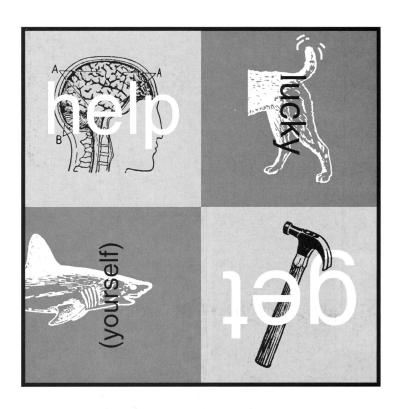
While launching his career at Roger Corman's Concorde/ New Horizons studio, Phedon Papamichael met director Katt Shea Ruben, for whom he subsequently photographed the features Dance of the Danned, Stripped to Kill, Streets, and Poison Ivy. In 1993, Papamichael was nominated for an

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For PAL orders, call South London Filter Ltd. at 011-44-171-620-3060 ASC Award for his work on the Oliver Stone-produced television miniseries *Wild Palms*. His resumé also includes the pilot for *The Conversation* and such feature credits as *Cool Runnings*, the Diane Keaton-directed drama *Unstrung Heroes*, director Jon Turtletaub's *While You Were Sleeping* and the upcoming summer film *Phenomenon*, which stars John Travolta.

Of his efforts for the televised media, he states, "Working in television poses completely different obstacles. On features, you can count on a certain amount of time to play with ideas. I'd arrive on set and see what kind of existing light had been provided by nature and perhaps augment that with small units to achieve the desired effect. One thing I've learned is not to be scared when you walk into situations and the lighting is perfect and you can basically shoot it with available light. There can be this urge to use lights simply because you have them and it seems more impressive. But sometimes simpler is better. When I walk onto a location and the light looks good, I know we'll have to finish the scene in an hour and a half.

"You shoot only a page or two a day on features, so you try to take advantage of the easier pace and the luxury of being at one location all day. But when you have to shoot a two- or three-page scene in an hour, I go in there with the attitude of 'Let's knock off the master shots, and if there are any cover shots, I can maintain the lighting on those."

Miniseries (one episode)

Edward J. Pei Streets of Laredo ASC Award Winner

Edward J. Pei has had little time to reflect upon his career since moving to Los Angeles in 1988 from New York, where he had been under the tutelage of English cinematographer Larry Pizer, serving first as an assistant and then as an operator. He's been too busy, shooting a handful of miniseries and feature films after graduating from a short term at Concorde/New Horizons, Roger Corman's "crash-

course bootcamp" in filmmaking.

"It was like a graduate school," Pei remembers fondly. "They treated people nicely and you got all of the gear you needed to shoot a movie. You had 18 to 19 days to shoot the film, which these days is just as good as a television movie [schedule.]"

Pei received an ASC Award nomination last year for his lush imagery on the miniseries Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All (Part II). He has also earned an Emmy Award nomination for 1994's Stephen King's The Stand, and a Cable ACE Award for his photography on the Lifetime series Veronica Claire. His other credits include The Gambler 5, Watchers II, Dead Man's Walk, and the features Only the Strong and Panther. He's currently shooting Overnight Delivery for New Line.

"Streets of Laredo was the second Western miniseries I had done, and I wanted it to make it look natural by using as little light as possible," offers Pei. "I don't think I used any lights on day exteriors. I also started to experiment with day interiors without any lights. I still used bounces, of course. I had sunlight coming through holes [in the set walls,] and bounced it over. The biggest lesson, and often the hardest one to learn, is that if it looks good, it looks good — don't touch it! It takes a lot of years just to learn how not to light anything. That's why the film looked good. A lot of things in nature look really good, and this applies especially to a Western. For instance, the concept of lighting under the characters' hats so that you can see their faces is artificial. In real life, their faces under the hats are dark. That's why they have the hat on, to get some shade! So my theory was that if the bounce didn't work, it wouldn't work [in nature that wav.]

"For exteriors," he reveals, "we were shooting on Eastman's 50 ASA 5245. That particular stock has a beautiful look for skies and the clouds. I wanted a really rich, 'big country' look — clean and natural. I didn't want the show to look grungy or dirty. For day interiors, I used 5297, the 250 ASA daylight film, and the latitude was fantastic — you can see the outside

without losing any contrast or detail. The day interiors had a lot of streaks of light, because outside it was always very sunny. After all, we were shooting in west Texas, and it never rains there! Inside, I wanted to see the sun penetrating through, so in the set design, the old saloon had holes in the roof that allowed streaks of light to shine through. Instead of using Xenons, I let the sun provide the streaks. That looked much better, because the streaks were more even and natural."

Laszlo George, CSC Danielle Steel's Zoya

"I studied film in Hungary at the same school as Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC and Laszlo Kovacs, ASC," says cinematographer Laszlo George, CSC, who fled his home country for Canada in 1959. "In fact, I was ahead of them one year, but we had the same teacher, Professor Illes Guyorgy.

"Illes told us that sometimes when you step into your house and see how beautiful the light is, you wish you had a camera right then. He would say, 'Remember, there's only one light out there: the sun! And that one light, at that moment, makes you want to take a picture.' So that's my philosophy on how to light a movie. It basically needs one light in the right position."

George, a veteran of the broadcast medium, shot commercials for more than 10 years before he segued into television movies. He has since photographed more than 40 films for the small screen. His credits include *The Park is Mine, A Letter to Three Wives, A Masterpiece of Murder, Always Remember I Love You, Last Flight Out, Danielle Steel's Kaleidoscope* and *The House on Sycamore Street*, as well as the feature films *Nothing Personal*, *Circle of Two* and *Rolling Vengeance*.

"On Zoya," he explains, "I tried to recreate the golden era of the South from 1917 to the 1920s. So I created a warm golden look for the whole movie with a combination of the Tiffen 812 filter and an 81EF. I also experimented with a black net behind the lens, which gave me a romantic look. The film is four hours long, and I decided

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that I wasn't going to use any backlight for the first two hours of the movie. Everything comes from the window — a window effect of one light. Then when [the main character] becomes a rich woman in New York, I started to introduce backlighting — a more modern style of lighting. That was my plan right at the beginning and it actually helped us because we were able to shoot very fast.

"In my style," he reveals, "I don't like to use big lights. For me it's a nuisance. It makes people go into overtime, while I like to work only 10 or 11 hours. So the biggest lights I have are 2.5K HMIs. I don't even carry 4Ks on my truck. With today's lenses and films, you can nearly shoot as is with available light. But to make it artistic, you have to change the light some. I like to use my location nearly as is, especially at night where I'm shooting a maximum of five footcandles. [On location] in Paris, I did all of the night footage at three footcandles. I like to use the lens at T1.3, wide open. With a 500 ASA film, at T1.3 and shooting 24 frames per second, I'd use three footcandles of light. Working this way, I can shoot so fast it's almost unbelievable. The whole world is basically lit. When I went to Russia, for example, where we did 8 or 10 days in St. Petersburg, there were many places that we weren't allowed to use more than one or two lights. But that worked very well because of my style."

A proponent of natural lighting, George believes it's important to recognize the potential of a location's inherent lighting qualities. "When you go to look at a location like the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and you say, 'There is such beautiful light here,' why do you need a truck [filled with lights] to destroy what you just fell in love with?!"

To facilitate his expedient technique, George insists on having his operators use fluid heads so that they can adjust the zoom themselves. "I want the operator to control the zoom," he declares. "I don't like the assistant to do the zooming. I want the person behind the camera to control the composition all of the time — without any marks. I like to have my operator

ready for anything that will happen. If it's a beautiful moment, a reaction of the actor, we should be ready to do the first take perfectly. The assistant is only pulling focus, he's not concerned about the zoom at all. The operator makes the decisions while we are filming. If you're looking through the camera and suddenly the actress is crying, go closer! Zoom in and grab it! It's a touch of documentary style. I never use gear-heads. I own three and I still don't use them. In television movies where you go on location, say in a small kitchen, it just holds you up and you end up shooting for 16 hours. I guarantee if you use big lights and gear heads, you'll go 14 to 18 hours a day. I can do the same thing in 11 hours and it's more beautiful anyway."

# **Alar Kivilo** *The Invaders*

Finding yourself trapped in a sweltering bus with 15,000 buzzing kamikaze flies nibbling at your resolve is a rarity even in the wild world of film, but for cinematographer Alar Kivilo, it was just another day at the office during production of *The Invaders*.

"The story is about alien invaders who crawl into human beings until you can't really tell who's who," he explains. "But wherever these invaders have been, they leave a trail of flies! We actually had to have a fly wrangler. It was very hard for my operator and assistant to shoot in that bus, out in the middle of the desert in the blistering heat, with 15,000 flies inside with them. We finally had to get them some netting that they could wear over their heads!"

Kivilo initially studied architecture and still photography before a summer job as a production assistant lured him to the camera department. *The Invaders* marks his fourth collaboration with director Paul Shapiro; the duo previously worked together on *Heads* for Showtime, *Avalanche* for Fox, and *Choices of the Heart* for Lifetime, which earned the cameraman a Cable ACE award nomination.

"The most satisfying part of my job is the creative collaboration with the director in terms of storytelling," Kivilo offers. "I'm not really into using the latest piece of gear just so I can be pleased with getting a great shot. I'm much more excited about developing a visual subtext for the story and working with the director. Those relationships are very important, and without them it's not very fun for me."

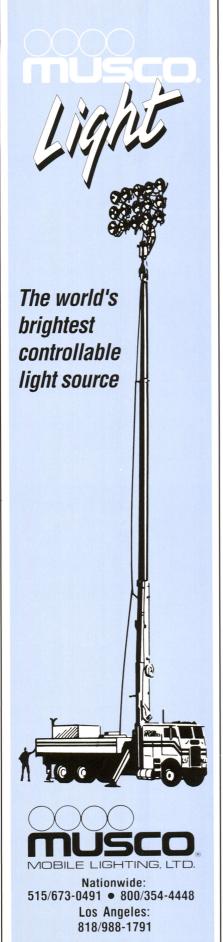
Kivilo's other credits include Mary Silliman's War, Young at Heart, Friends at Last, and the upcoming King of the Volcano for HBO. He also co-owns a commercial production company and serves as a director/cinematographer for such clients as Apple, Molson, Levi Strauss and Pepsi.

Since he often shoots for the small screen, Kivilo is no stranger to the heightened demands heaped upon a cinematographer's shoulders. "It's always a challenge doing television. When I work, I try not to make a distinction between whether it's TV or a feature. It's all storytelling and filmmaking to me. The storytelling process is the most important aspect, but you obviously have to tailor your approach a bit. I always try to work very simply; I don't like complicating things. If one image tells the story, you don't need 20 shots. I don't believe that films are made in the editing. I don't think the director or cinematographer should be just gathering images to see what they can do with them later. Pre-planning and some thought about the concept and style of the story should be done beforehand. Then while you're shooting, you can develop a very economical style of telling that story."

In their desire to produce eve-catching imagery for the miniseries, Kivilo and Shapiro quickly honed in on a visual grammar for The Invaders' alternate take on reality. "Right from the start," he reveals, "Paul and I decided that, although it was a science-fiction piece, we shouldn't be going for a high-tech, glossy look. Rather, we decided to try and find the textural, raw, gritty and creepy undertones that reside in everyday life. I played around with all sorts of colors that I hadn't used before — colors like sulfuric-yellow and electric-green, which provided a subtle







reminder that these invaders were present."

Paul Sarossy, CSC Picture Windows: "Soir Bleu"

It isn't any surprise that Paul Sarossy took to the camera. His childhood in Ontario, Canada was imbued with the cinema; his father was a newsreel cameraman who scorned television, but borrowed films from the news station so he could project them for the entire family nightly in their home.

Later, while attending film school in Toronto, Sarossy quickly began shooting other students' projects, and formed several relationships with talented peers who would soon lead the next wave of independent filmmakers on the Toronto scene. Sarossy's early work with director Atom Egovan, for whom he shot *Speaking* Parts (which was nominated for a 1990 CSC Award for Best Feature Film Cinematography), The Adjuster, and Exotica (which won both a Genie Award and the CSC Award for Best Cinematography in 1993), brought him to the forefront as one of Canada's top cinematographers.

Some of Sarossy's other credits include *White Room* (winner of the 1990 CSC Award for Best Cinematography), *Love and Human Remains*, and the upcoming *Mariette in Ecstasy*, directed by John Bailey, ASC. He's currently shooting the film *Mistrial* for HBO.

Although Sarossy has found his niche in the Canadian avant-garde, he also appreciates the influx of television work moving up from the United States. "Toronto is a very active place for television production," he asserts, "but my background is more with the Canadian independent film production scene. I guess one of the big differences is the time that you're given to get the work done. Television projects seem to have very tight schedules, but the schedules aren't much different from what you get for lower-budget features. The transition wasn't terribly radical for me, but it was a lot of fun to see what I could do within the confinements of the TV schedule."

For Picture Windows, the cinematographer teamed for the first time with veteran director Norman Jewison. "It was very interesting to work with someone who was used to very luxurious schedules on feature projects," Sarossy says. "He wanted to be very prepared because he was afraid that there wouldn't be enough time to do the kind of blocking and coverage that he was used to.

"This particular segment of Picture Windows was an interesting challenge," he continues. "It illustrated the story of the painting 'Soir Bleu,' by Edward Hopper. We used the style of the painting as a grounding point from which to establish the visual look and approach of the film. We tried to respect Hopper's color scheme and the tawdry circus atmosphere of the painting, which also serves as the setting of the piece. The film starts with the actual painting, which we then re-created with actors on a set, so I tried to mimic the colors and tones both in the art direction and in lighting. The result tended to be a mixture of cool and warm colors, in contrast to the more garish colors of the circus bigtop itself."

Assessing the results, he says, "With 'Soir Bleu,' the interesting visual contrast for me was the comparison between the performance in the big-top versus all of the backstage activity happening behind the curtain. There are a number of scenes that take place in the region of the tent that's just outside the big-top, where the performers are getting ready to go on stage. We tried to construct different looks for that backstage area, whether the performers were on or just hanging around after hours or at different times in the night. I think that's the most interesting part of the work."

E Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences celebrate the contributions of the industry's oft-overlooked technicians, inventors, and equipment manufacturers with the presentation of the Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards. This year's garlands were presented on March 2 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel, in a ceremony hosted by Oscar-nominated actor Richard Drevfuss.

Scientific and Technical Awards are given for devices, methods, formulas, discoveries or inventions which have a proven history of use in the motion picture industry.

Awards may be granted in any of three classifications: Academy Award of Merit (Oscar statuette), for basic advancements which have a definite influence upon the industry; Scientific and Engineering Award (Academy plaque), for those feats which exhibit a high level of engineering and are of importance to the progress of the industry; and Technical Achievement Award (Academy certificate), for those accomplishments which contribute to the progress of the industry.

In past years, the Academy Award of Merit has honored the development of the modern motion picture camera; the introduction of CinemaScope, VistaVision and Todd-AO; the development of the Dolby sound systems; the introduction of Eastman Kodak's ground-breaking family of T-Grain EXR negative and intermediate motion picture films; and Panavision International's development of the Primo line of prime and zoom lenses.

Also receiving an Oscar statuette each year is the recipient of the Gordon E. Sawyer Award. Established in 1980 to honor the memory of Sawyer, the longtime head of the Samuel Goldwyn Studios' sound department, the trophy recognizes a lifetime of achievement by an individual "whose technological contributions have brought credit to the industry."

# 1996 Sci-Tech Awards Honor the Spirit of Invention

# by Chris Probst

This year's award recipients were as follows:

# Gordon E. Sawyer Award

Donald C. Rogers, retiring senior vice president of postproduction for Warner Bros., is the 12th recipient of this honor. Beginning his 43 years in the industry as a cableman, Rogers later worked on the sound crews for The King and I and South Pacific — efforts for which he won Oscars. He also headed the camera department at Todd-AO, where he was directly involved with the first lightweight 65mm production camera, as well as the Todd-AO 35mm wide-scope lens system. From 1971 to 1992, he was director of technical operations at the Samuel Goldwyn Studios, where he worked with Sawver.

Rogers, a member of the Academy's Scientific and Technical Awards Committee since 1962, has represented the Sound Branch on the Academy's Board of Governors for 16 years and was instrumental in the technical design of the Academy's Samuel Goldwyn Theater — overseeing the complete renovation of its sound system in 1992.

# Scientific and Engineering Awards (Academy Plaques)

Iain Neil for the optical design, Rick Gelbard for the mechanical design, Eric Dubberke for the engineering, and Panavision International, L.P. for the development of the Primo 3:1 Zoom Lens. The lens' high contrast and absence of flare, along with its ability to provide close focusing and to maintain constant image size while changing focus, makes it a truly unique tool for image-capture.

#### कर कर कर

Arnold & Richter Cine Technik for the development of the Arriflex 535 Series of cameras for motion picture cinematography. The 535 allows, for the first time, full computer control of the operation and functions of a sync-sound production camera.

#### अह अह अह

Martin S. Mueller for the Design and development of the MSM 9801 IMAX 65mm/15 perf production motion picture camera. The MSM 9801 represents a new plateau in the development of IMAX format cameras. With features such as a 180° shutter and superior viewing, this easily-loadable camera is light enough for Steadicam use yet shares the abilities of an MOS production camera.

# वह वह वह

Ronald C. Goodman, Attila Szalay, Steven Sass and Spacecam Systems, Inc. for the design of the Spacecam gyroscopically-stabilized camera system, which can be utilized on helicopters, boats and camera cars. Allowing for substantially increased maneuverability and camera support, the device has expanded the boundaries and applications of stabilized cinematography.

# रह रह रह

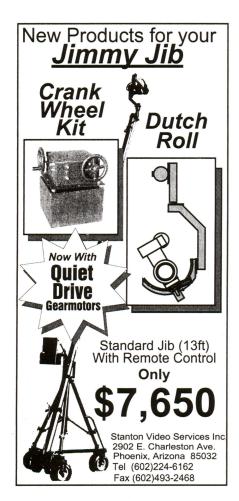
Alvy Ray Smith, Ed Catmull, Thomas Porter and Tom Duff for their innovations in digital image compositing. The group's groundbreaking methodology has significantly influenced the compositing of images via digital methods.

#### er er er

Digital Theater Systems for the design and development

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of the DTS Digital Sound System for motion picture exhibition.

#### कर कर कर

Dolby Laboratories for the design and development of the SR-D Digital Sound System for motion picture exhibition.

#### क्र क्र क्र

Sony Corporation for the design and development of the SDDS Digital Sound System for motion picture exhibition.

#### 25 25 25

Howard Flemming and Ronald Uhlig for their pioneering work toward digital motion picture sound.

#### क्र कर कर

Colin Mossman, Joe Wary, Hans Leisinger, Gerald Painter and Deluxe Laboratories for the design and development of the Deluxe Quad Format Digital Sound Printing Head, a device capable of printing all digital sound-on-film formats and a timecode control track on a single theatrical print.

### वह वह वह

David Gilmartin, Johannes Borggrebe, Jean-Pierre Gagnon, Frank Ricotta and Technicolor, Inc. for the design and development of the Technicolor Contact Printer Sound Head, which can simultaneously encode all digital sound-on-film formats and a timecode control track on a single theatrical print.

#### ak ak ak

# Technical Achievement Awards (Academy Certificates)

David Pringle and Yan Zhong Fang for the design and development of Lightning Strikes, a flexible, high-performance electronic lightning-effect system. Utilizing a low-pressure, long-arc Xenon source, this device can be used to create any effects that require accurate control of a very bright light for a brief duration.

#### कर कर कर

Al Jensen, Chuck Headley, Jean Messner and Hazem Nabulsi of CEI Technology for producing a self-contained, flicker-free, color video assist. This device can be used with virtually any professional motion picture camera and its switchable options allow for image manipulation and increased low-light sensitivity.

#### कर कर कर

Peter Denz of Präzisions-Entwicklung Denz, also for developing a flicker-free, color video assist. The versatile system is available in a wide variety of configurations for various motion picture cameras.

#### क कर कर

Gary Demos, David Ruhoff, Dan Cameron and Michelle Feraud for their efforts in the creation of the Digital Productions Digital Film Compositing System. This pioneering work illustrated and introduced some of the capabilities that digital compositing techniques could provide for motion picture production.

#### ak ak ak

Douglas Smythe, Lincoln Hu, Douglas S. Kay and Industrial Light and Magic for creation of the ILM Digital Film Compositing System. ILM's efforts in integrating digital imagemanipulation and compositing into motion pictures has substantially influenced how motion pictures are produced.

#### कर कर कर

Computer Film Company for the CFC Digital Film Compositing System. Like Digital Productions and ILM, CFC has developed a digital compositing system that has enhanced the art of motion picture production.

### कर कर कर

Joe Finnegan (a.k.a. Joe Yrigoyen) for developing the Air Ram for motion picture stunt effects. This pneumatically-powered device was the first practical hinged platform to provide camcontrolled, progressive acceleration for improved safety in propelling stuntpersons. The Air Ram's small size makes it easy to install and conceal.

#### PK 2K 2K

Toulouse University Genie Des Systems (concept); Kodak Pathe CTP Cine (prototype); and Eclair Laboratories and Martineau Industries for the development and implementation of the Toulouse Electrolytic Silver Recovery Cell. This economical and easily maintained, single-step silver recovery system eliminates the need for subsequent treatment of the effluent to meet the current environmental standards.

#### कर कर कर

BHP, Incorporated for developing digital sound printing heads for motion pictures. BHP-engineered components are integral to the state-of-the-art digital sound film printing systems currently in use.

# क्र कर कर

Clay Davis and John Carter of Todd-AO for creating an automated patchbay system for motion picture sound transfer and dubbing operations. This system, which eliminates the manual patchcord approach in favor of a fully-automated solid-state switching matrix, greatly increases both efficiency and reliability.

### PK 25 25

James Deas of the Warner Bros. Studio Facility for the design and development of an Automated Patchbay and Metering System for motion picture sound transfer and dubbing operations.

#### क्र कर कर

Pascal Chedeville for the design of the L.C. Concept Digital Sound System for motion picture exhibition.

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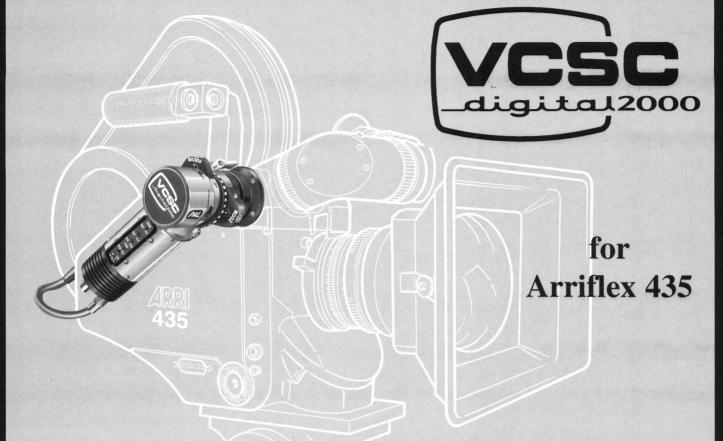
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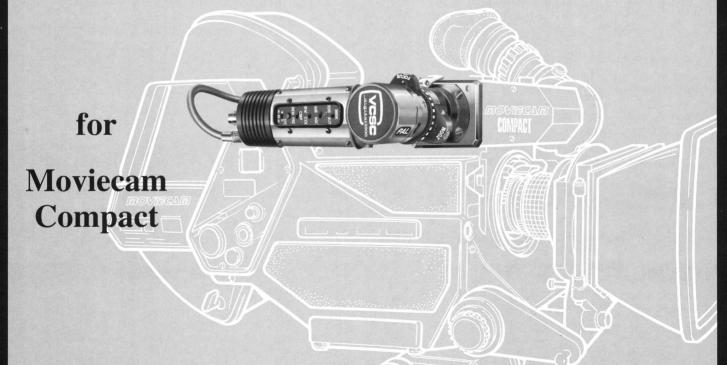
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# China Seas: An All-Star Trip

MGM adventure film charted a choppy course from screenplay to silver screen.

# by John Andrew Gallagher

I RVING THALBERG'S 1935 PRODUCTION OF *CHINA SEAS* epitomized the studio system at its best, offering Depression-weary audiences pure entertainment with adventure, romance, intrigue, comedy, personality stars and spare-no-expense production.

China Seas also featured one of the most convoluted evolutions in MGM history, beginning when the company purchased the Crosbie Garstin novel in September, 1931 from the late author's wife (he died on April 30, 1931). A lurid melodrama set in Southeast Asia, the novel focused on the interracial love between Yu-Lan Wing, daughter of a Chinese magnate who is

the invisible emperor of Oriental commerce, and the English sea captain Alan Shane-Gaskell. In the novel, Shane-Gaskell is wounded when modern-day Chinese pirates attack his ship, and Yu-Lan nurses him back to health. A supporting character named Jamesy McArdle poses as a pig merchant but is actually in cahoots with the pirates to get back at the British, who drummed him out of the Navy. Meanwhile, Yu-Lan and Shane-Gaskell fall in love, and she reveals to him that she is the brains behind the pirates while her father is little more than an opium addict. Yu-Lan bears Shane-Gaskell's baby, but when Esther, his old flame from England, is widowed, he goes to tell Yu-Lan that he is leaving her, only to find that their love child is dead.

Planning the picture for William Randolph Hearst's Cosmopolitan Productions, Thalberg first envisioned the project along the lines of the 1925 hit *East of Suez* 

(an attack suggested by writer Richard Sharpe), and intended it as a vehicle for Charles Bickford, who had recently distinguished himself in MGM's *Dynamite*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille. In August, 1931, while still closing the rights deal, Thalberg assigned three different writers — Richard Sharpe, John W. McDermott and Norman Reilly Raine — to come up with treatments. The writers all worked independently of each other, a common Thalberg practice. All three treatments followed the book closely, but the

project was put on hold until January, 1932, when John Colton (author of the play *The Shanghai Gesture*) and John Lynch were put on the script. Tod Browning was set to direct Clark Gable as Captain Gaskell and Myrna Loy (still in her exotic Oriental period) as Yu-Lan. In May, Browning was switched to *The Good Earth*, but when that film was postponed, he was put back on *China Seas*.

Thalberg wanted to eliminate the sub-plot of the love child, which would have posed problems with the Hays Office, and suggested stressing the characterizations rather than the plot. In February,

> Carey Wilson was assigned the screenplay. He worked out several versions with Browning: Gaskell a) drinks himself into a state of degradation and kills Yu-Lan when he finds out that she controls the pirates; b) Gaskell and Yu-Lan live happily ever after, sailing the China Seas with their baby; c) Gaskell ritualistically kills Yu-Lan in order to cleanse himself of her, and takes the baby with him; d)

Gaskell walks out on her, she and the pirates attack his ship, he's spared but becomes an opium addict (!); and e) a version suggested by Thalberg, in which Gaskell kills the evil Yu-Lan, rescues their baby, and goes off with Esther to England.

In July, 1932, writer/actor Ralph Graves suggested that Tod Browning was the wrong director for the film; with such credits as *Dracula* (1931) and *Freaks* (1932), he made unique and unusual films, but Gable fans expected a love story. Undaunted



A rumpled
Wallace Beery
and glamorous
Jean Harlow
offer a study in
contrasts.

(and obviously committed for the moment to Browning), Thalberg announced that John Gilbert would play the Gaskell role rather than Gable, and continued with another seven script versions between August and December of 1932.

In a Tod Browning-Ralph Block treatment, Gaskell kills himself for failing his ship and dies in Yu-Lan's arms. In Paul Bern's treatment, Gaskell owns a Chinese gambling joint and becomes a pirate in league with Yu-Lan. Boris Ingster recommended that Gaskell be presented as a down-on-his-luck bum rescued by

Yu-Lan, while in Burke Jenkins' treatment, Gaskell loves Yu-Lan completely and the duo share in mourning the loss of their baby. Felix Reisenberg's outline went back to Gaskell and Yu-Lan living happily ever after, while John Lynch's new treatment made Yu-Lan half Chinese, half Caucasian. Herbert Peters delivered a treatment on December 28 that had Yu-Lan being tortured by her mutinous pirates before being rescued by Gaskell. For the New Year of 1933, Gouverneur Morris returned to a faithful adaptation of the original book. All of this would try the creative patience of any filmmaker, and in January, 1933, after announcing that Richard Boleslawski (Rasputin and the Empress) would direct, Thalberg once again shelved the project.

In April, Thalberg revived *China Seas* with Albert Lewin (as much a perfectionist as Thalberg) and C. Gardner Sullivan as supervisors. The

pair reviewed the previous treatments and scripts, and decided to focus most of the action aboard Gaskell's ship, the *Kin Lung*, rather than at Yu-Lan's palace. Although Yu-Lan was still revealed to be behind the pirates, no harm comes to Gaskell because of her love for him. Gable was reinstated as the lead, with Myrna Loy still set to play Yu-Lan. Lewin and Sullivan each wrote treatments, and on September 29, 1933, Leon Gordon delivered a screenplay incorporating their work. Lewin was named the film's supervisor, and active preproduction commenced.

Thalberg, still unhappy with the material, brought in Jules Furthman (Morocco, Shanghai Express), a specialist in exotic adventure. A new character, a prostitute named China Doll, was introduced. After additional pages from Sam Hellman and nautical effects expert James C. Havens, another C. Gardner Sullivan treatment in which China Doll sacrifices herself for Gaskell, and a treatment from montage expert Seymour Stern, Thalberg decided to make China Doll the female lead, with Yu-Lan to be a minor character. Clark Gable and Jean Harlow had provided box-office dynamite for MGM in Victor Fleming's Red Dust (1932)

and Sam Wood's *Hold Your Man* (1933), and Harlow was given the wisecracking, sexy China Doll role.

Tay Garnett signed with MGM to direct *China Seas* on December 11, 1933, at a salary of \$40,000. The 39-year-old filmmaker had started as a gag writer for Hal Roach and Mack Sennett, graduating to screenwriter on DeMille-produced dramas like *White Gold* (1927) and *Skyscraper* (1928). He made his directorial bow with the silent *Celebrity* (1928), and exhibited his flair for exotic comedydramas with the seminal early talkie *Her Man* (1930)

A stylish lobby card promises star power on the high seas.



and the classic romance One Way Passage (1932).

By the time Garnett joined the project in March, 1934, Thalberg had made China Seas his own personal production. Though he had supervised all Metro pictures since 1924, Thalberg had "personally produced" only one previous film, Riptide (1934), starring his wife, Norma Shearer. Preproduction officially commenced on April 26, 1934, and Thalberg assigned a new battalion of writers to the script. Wilbur Daniel Steele, who had done some work on the China Doll character, suggested Charles Laughton for the part of Jamesy. In a March 9 story conference with Garnett, Thalberg himself worked out some of the details of the pirate attack on the Kin Lung, including a torture scene in which Gaskell's fingernails are being pulled out with pliers, and an ending with the Captain's old flame, renamed Sybil, leaving the Orient, enabling Gaskell and China Doll to head off into the sunset together. Jules Furthman delivered a screenplay draft on May 7, 1934 that included these ideas. It was revised by Willard Mack, who introduced a new character for comic relief — Charlie McCaleb, a drunken writer. Claudine West wrote the first scene of the picture with

Gaskell and Sybil (June 28, 1934). With John Colton, one of the first writers on the project, Garnett wrote in Jamesy's suicide scene and a twist ending in which China Doll escapes the police under the pretense that she had always been working undercover with Gaskell (August 19, 1934).

Monckton Hoffe rewrote scenes from October 8, 1934 through January 3, 1935, suggesting that it would be folly to have Gable play an Englishman; Anita Loos, who had written the Harlow hits *Red Headed Woman* (1932), *Hold Your Man* (1933) and *The Girl from Missouri* (1934), concentrated on Gable-Harlow dialogue; Paul Hervey Fox wrote alternate scenes from October 29, 1934 through January 17, 1935, focusing on the pirate attack; Marian Ainslee wrote the scene of China Doll visting Sybil's cabin; and Garnett wrote scenes dealing with the Gaskell-Sybil relationship.

Through all of this, Jules Furthman was completing a revised screenplay, which he delivered on January 29, 1935, concurrent with Talbot Jennings' draft of the first third of the script (delivered on January 18), and a James Kevin McGuinness script which was handed in on March 7, 1935. Production had been scheduled to begin during the first week of February, but was delayed when Gable was stranded with the company of William Wellman's *The Call of the Wild* during a blizzard at Mount Baker, Washington.

Thalberg took the opportunity for more scripting — he had Louis Paul revise a key Gaskell-Sybil scene and then put Metro ace John Lee Mahin to work revising the first 30 pages, the steamroller scene and the Gaskell-Sybil farewell. The finishing touches on the script were made by McGuinness, with a revision of the last scene, the opening, the next 30 pages, the steamroller sequence and the typhoon.

The final screenplay credit for China Seas went to Jules Furthman and James Kevin McGuinness, but a total of 41 writers, many of them noted playwrights and novelists, had toiled on the material from 1930 through 1935 (surely some kind of Hollywood record). They were: Richard Sharpe, John W. McDermott, Norman Reilly Raine, Gouverneur Morris, John Colton, John Lynch, Carey Wilson, Ralph Graves, Tod Browning, Ralph Block, Paul Bern, Boris Ingster, Burke Jenkins, Felix Reisenberg, Herbert Peters, Richard Boleslawski, Bayard Veiller, Endre Bohem, John Willard, Captain John Dahl, Albert Lewin, C. Gardner Sullivan, Leon Gordon, Jules Furthman, Sam Hellman, James C. Havens, Seymour Stern, Wilbur Daniel Steele, Willard Mack, Claudine West, Tay Garnett, Vincent Lawrence, Norman Krasna, Monckton Hoffe, Anita Loos, Paul Hervey Fox, Marion Ainslee, Talbot Jennings, James Kevin McGuinness, Louis Paul, John Lee Mahin and Irving Thalberg

China Seas was one of the plum assignments of Garnett's career. Thalberg spared no expense and provided an all-star cast. Gable gives a characteristically hard-boiled, hard-drinking portrayal; he's introduced in the opening scene with several days' beard growth, nursing a hangover, growling, grumbling, surly, walking through crowds of coolies in a long overhead tracking shot. In a favorite Garnett theme,

he tries to reform himself by marrying Sybil (Rosalind Russell in an early role), a proper English lady of refinement, but is inextricably bound to China Doll — Jean Harlow at her sexiest and brassiest, wearing outrageous Adrian costumes of lamé with chains. Wallace Beery played Jamesy McArdle as a modern-day variation on his Long John Silver in Victor Fleming's *Treasure Island* (1934).

In an interview with this writer (July 10, 1977), Tay Garnett recalled, "There never was an actor who was more of a director's actor than Clark Gable. He was a director's dream. You told Clark and that was what he did and he did it well most of the time. Harlow was not the natural actor that Gable was, nor had she had his training, but she was trying. She was a worker. She came in prepared, she knew her dialogue, and she would say, 'Look, you know, this is a tough scene, this is an emotional scene, and I'm not much of an actress, so try and be patient with me.' But it was easy to be patient with her because you knew that every time she came to bat she was giving everything she had. Now sometimes she gave you too much, more than you could use, or more than she could handle. But in any case she was easy to direct because she would listen to you and try and do exactly what you asked her to do.

"The two of them were a joy to work with. They had done a couple of pictures prior to that and they liked each other. With Harlow being untrained to a great extent, you'd get in a scene in a close-up or an over-the-shoulder shot, and if it was a highly emotional scene, she would sway around and move her shoulders and her head so that in this close thing she'd go behind Gable's head in the over-the-shoulder shot. So we'd do Gable's angle first and she wouldn't worry too much in that because she knew that was only the back of her head, so she'd just play the scene and not wander around. When it came time to do her scene, as soon as she started to wind up and weave around in a very broad exaggerated motion, which would have been very unpleasant to watch and would have destroyed the scene, Gable reached outside the camera line, caught her elbows, pinned them to her sides and held them rigidly in her spot so she could not waver. She would be physically incapable of moving around and destroying the scene. I only tell this because it gives you a good example of the camaraderie that existed between them and the rest of us on the set.

"Now Beery, on the other hand, was a difficult man. He was a bully. He felt his position as a star very heavily on his shoulders, and he never read a line of dialogue in his life the way it was written. He always rewrote it, but one didn't mind that too much because the way he rewrote it, it fit Wallace Beery and the character he was playing perhaps better than the written word would have done. So, all in all, he was not too difficult once it had been estabished who was the boss. One had to establish that early because he had shoved several of the younger and less experienced directors around pretty badly at MGM before I got him on China Seas. I had a very frank understanding with him before we started the picture that if there was to be any doubt as to who was the boss on the picture, he'd better read his contract again



The everdapper Clark Gable catches a ride in a rickshaw. Note the bottom of the rearprojection screen above Gables' feet.

and it would show him that the director was to tell him what to do. After that first understanding he tried a couple of times to push me around as he had the younger guys, and failing that, he stopped trying and we got along very well.

"It was so much easier to let Wallace Beery steal a scene, but I'd do it at an angle where his face didn't show, or at a part where one was certain that they would not be using that particular piece of the take in the finished film. One always protected oneself by covering everything where Beery was inclined to go overboard and catch flies and all the rest of it. There would always come a time when you'd have to say, 'Well, Wally, you're just out on the sidelines on this so it doesn't matter what you do, you just go ahead. . . ,' and he'd play it straight. You usually said that when the camera was really on him and he wasn't too sure. Somehow or another I always managed to muddle through with him."

Rounding out the cast was Lewis Stone as the coward who must redeem himself by sacrificing his life, as Richard Barthelmess would do in the Furthman-scripted Howard Hawks film *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939); Robert Benchley, in his first major role in a feature as the drunken McCaleb ("I had a spangle once. A cocker spangle."); C. Aubrey Smith as the representative of British imperialism in the Orient; Hattie McDaniel (as Harlow's maid), who at one point does a hilarious caricature of the sex goddess;

Edward Brophy as a comedic thief; Donald Meek as a jittery press player; Akim Tamiroff as an oily Russian; and Soo Yong as Yu-Lan, a role that had changed from the main character in the original Garstin novel to a small supporting part.

China Seas is a rousing melodrama, entertainment in the grand Hollywood tradition. Thalberg, Garnett, and the teams of writers created a variation on Red Dust (the Gable/good girl/bad girl triangle) and Grand Hotel (an all-star cast of characters isolated in one setting), with a lively dose of the Terry and the Pirates comic strip adventure. As Gable captains the Kin Lung through the China Seas, he is unaware that there is a scoundrel in his midst — Beery, who orchestrates a Malay pirate attack on the ship. Gable is tortured with the steel "boot," which screws tighter and tighter to crush his foot. Harlow eventually turns the tables on Beery and saves the day.

There are three major setpieces. During a typhoon, as tons of water are dumped on the ship, a steamroller becomes loosened from its mooring, crushing coolies to death before Gable saves William Henry from a similar fate and fastens the steamroller in place during the torrential downpour. In the midst of all this, the drunken Benchley tries to light a cigarette in the typhoon. Later, Garnett stages an insurrection aboard the ship; close-ups of running feet, the unlocking of the arsenal, and guns taken out by the rebels are presented in a montage of juxtaposed im-

Director of photography Ray June, ASC starred on the technical side of China Seas.



ages as the pirates board the ship. In the film's climax, Lewis Stone, who has had both legs smashed by the pirates' gun butts, crawls along the deck and grenades the Malays, freeing Gable to blast them away at the gun turret.

China Seas was a massive production for MGM, costing one million 1935 dollars. In late August, 1934, James McKay was sent to Hong Kong to shoot location scenes, with Clyde DeVinna, ASC as cameraman. The 400-foot long Kin Lung set was built on a Metro stage on rockers similar to those constructed at Universal for Garnett's Destination Unknown, with special effects expert James Basevi handling miniatures of the ship. The full-scale ship used in Metro's Tugboat Annie (1933) was refurbished as the pirates' junk. Principal photography started in early April, 1935, but it was necessary for Thalberg to delegate second-unit chores to several other filmmakers. Under Garnett's supervision, matte painter/photographer Warren Newcombe made some of the establishing shots of the Singapore harbor, James McKay directed inserts of the steamroller sequence, and on April 20, Garnett's friend William Wellman (in between assignments at the studio) helped out with shots of Lewis Stone securing the hand grenades to bomb the pirates and also handled a few days of pirate and insert shots. Garnett tangled with Thalberg when he found that the executive was directing his China Seas actors on the sidelines, and actually threatened to quit the picture before Thalberg apologized and stayed away from the set for the remainder of the shoot.

Garnett was greatly aided by cinematographer Ray June, ASC, whose credits include *The Bat Whispers, Arrowsmith, Horse Feathers, Treasure Island, Barbary Coast* and *Test Pilot*. The director remembered that "June was the studio's suggestion for the cameraman. He was a darn fine cameraman and I was delighted to get him. My favorites, Arthur Miller, ASC

and Edward Snyder, ASC, were working at that time at other companies and I couldn't possibly get them, so I went ahead with Ray and never had a moment of regret. He was a wonderfully cooperative, able and inspired cameraman."

China Seas was completed on May 16, 1935, and Joseph Breen, the new head of the AMPP, granted his organization's seal to the picture the following day. Many censorship boards found the Malay boot scene too gruesome. New York, Japan, Holland and Sweden trimmed the scene and the United Kingdom cut it entirely, while in Hitler's Germany the shots of the steamroller crushing the coolies were eliminated but the Malay boot scene remained. As expected, certain of the Oriental territories were not pleased with the picture. It was banned in British Malaysia (now Singapore) and Hong Kong and Shanghai deleted the Malay boot torture scene. After previews at the San Bernardino Fox and Glendale's Alexander Theatre, China Seas opened to smash business on August 9, 1935 at the Capitol Theatre on Broadway, and was held over for three weeks, breaking the house record set by Tugboat Annie. The day before the Capitol opening, Gable and Harlow were guests on Louella Parsons' radio program broadcast from the Hollywood Hotel, doing scenes from the film adapted by William Bacher.

Garnett, writing in the August 10, 1935 issue of MGM Studio News, talked about the entertainment value of China Seas: "If we ever come to a point where double-entendre dialogue is preferred to the clean, wholesome, direct appeal of action-full pictures, we'll all be in a bad spot. . . I think it's inevitable that the screen shortly will enter a period in which physical action, thrills — if you like the term — will be considered of primary importance. With it will come a new type of romance. We are getting away from the drawing room."

#### Credits

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture; produced by Irving G. Thalberg; associate producer: Albert C. Lewin; directed by Tay Garnett; screenplay: Jules Furthman and James Kevin McGuinness; based on the novel by Crosbie Garstin; director of photography: Ray June, ASC; camera crew: Ray Ramsey, Ellsworth Fredericks, ASC; editor: William LeVanway; musical score: Herbert Stothart; art director: Cedric Gibbons; associates: James C. Havens, Edwin B. Willis, David Townsend, Elmer Sheeley; assistant director: Joseph Newman; second unit directors: William A. Wellman, James McKay, Cedric Gibbons, Harry Bucquet; second-unit director of photography, Clyde DeVinna, ASC; production manager: Joe Cohn; unit manager: Frank Messenger; special effects: Warren Newcombe; miniatures: James Basevi; recording director (Western Electric): Douglas Shearer. Running time, 93 minutes. Released July 25, 1935.

Capt. Alan Gaskell, Clark Gable; Dolly Portland, Jean Harlow; Jamesey MacArdle, Wallace Beery; Tom Davids, Lewis Stone; Sybil Barclay, Rosalind Russell; Dawson, Dudley Digges; Sir Guy, C. Aubrey Smith; Charlie McCaleb, Robert Benchley; Rockwell, William Henry; Wilbur Timmons, Edward Brophy; Mrs. Timmons, Lillian Bond; Ngah, Ivan Lebedeff; Romanoff, Akim Tamiroff; Mrs. Olga Vollberg, Live de Maigret; Second Officer Kingston, Pat Flaherty; Bertie the Purser, Charles Irwin; Yu-Lan, Soo Yong; Carol, Carol Ann Beery; Isabel McCarthy, Hattie McDaniel; Chess Player, Donald Meek; Mrs. Higgins, Emily Fitzroy; Ship's Officer, Sergeant of the Guards, Tom Gubbins; Chief Steward Garry, Forrester Harvey; Ah Sing, Willie Fung.

# On the Spot

# Waverunning

# by Mary Hardesty

How do you tell a great underwater cinematographer from a fair one? Answer: the great ones always emerge from the water with their cameras.

Veteran water cameraman Ron Condon thinks nothing about taking big risks to get those great shots. But even someone of his experience has moments of apprehension when trying to resurface with camera in hand, as Condon did during the recent filming of a Yamaha Waverunner jet-ski commercial in Hawaii.

"I had on a very expensive camera rig, and I knew I just couldn't let go, but sometimes it can get a little scary and the surf will hold you on the bottom," states Condon. "I remember pushing off the bottom as hard as I could with the camera and not being able to make it to the top. You just have to remember to relax, stay calm and try again. On the third attempt, I was able to break through to the surface."

Irish-born director Meiert Avis, renowned in the music video world for powerful and luminous imagery, was brought on board the Yamaha gig by agency Ground Zero. Avis often does his own camerawork, but for this spot he chose two other cinematographers. Aaron Bowen applied his skills on the land shoot, while Condon's were tested in the waters.

"When there's talent and action to direct, I prefer to concentrate on that and let the cinematographer worry about the technical aspects," observes Avis. "The reason we had two directors of photography was because so much of the shoot was done in the water. I work with Aaron a lot, and he wanted to try the water shoots, but the surf was going to be pretty heavy. You don't want to put people into new situations where they are in danger if they don't have the proper training. Safety was our first concern, and I had heard that Ron's forte

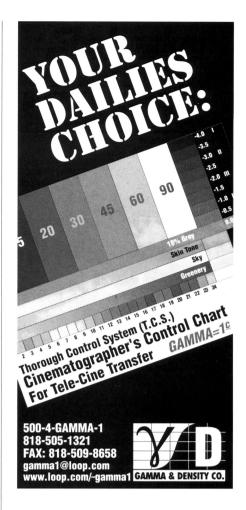
was water. I wanted someone who felt at home in that world. Ron's from Hawaii and was brought up in the surf, so it was a very familiar situation for him."

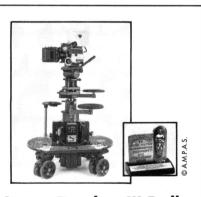
The crew spent a week in Hawaii in anticipation of wipeout-caliber waves, but unfortunately were able to shoot for only three days. "For timing as well as safety reasons, we were shooting during poor surf weather, but we used extremely wide lenses to make those six-foot waves look like 20-foot waves," says Condon, who added to the feeling of height by keeping a low profile to the water's surface. With few exceptions, he didn't use anything longer than a 24mm lens.

"What Meiert wanted to do was to really put the viewer in the water and make them feel what it's like to be in that environment," says Condon. "By placing the point of view at the water level, the audience is immersed in the medium without being distracted from the storyline, which was about a surfer drowning."

Prior to the director's arrival, Condon shot a test that resulted in some of the spot's most amazing footage. "I was afraid we wouldn't have big enough waves when it came time to shoot, so I took a lifeguard friend of mine and did some test shooting in eight- to 10-foot waves at Pipeline," he recalls. "I would put both of us in the impact zone, dive down and grab onto some coral on the bottom, hold my position and wait for the wave to break in front of me. It was like a stormfront coming. I would see the lifeguard get sucked away, and then I would get blasted."

Due to the hazardous nature of his business, Condon's uniform in the water always includes a safety helmet. "I like a very foamy lining because that way the helmet will pull on your neck to indicate which way is up to the surface," reports the cameraman. "When you're





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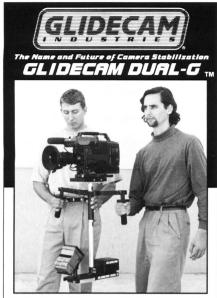
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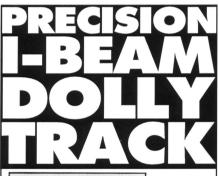


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caught under a lot of turbulence and it goes black, you have to stay down at the bottom until you see some light. Then, just like the cliché, you swim toward the light. I've relied on my helmet quite a few times."

Director Avis wanted to convey an intense metaphysical experience. Condon accomplished this through a blend of slow motion, unusual camera angles and a music track of the spiritual song "Amazing Grace."

"The obvious choice to achieve the heightened sense of reality the spot called for was slow motion, but when the tests came back they looked too beautiful," claims the cinematographer. "They looked like tourism spots in all of the shots except the one in which we narrowed the shutter. When we combined a narrowed shutter with a shooting speed of 120 fps, it gave us the dreamlike quality we were seeking."

Condon's test footage was added to Avis' carefully planned shots, which featured a real Hawaiian lifeguard and a Waverunner fitted with over-the-shoulder and front mounts

"The first thing the lifeguard did was to make sure the Waverunner was still safe to drive with the camera mounts on," notes Condon, who could only spend about 20 minutes in the water before having to return to the support boats to swap cameras. "The mounts I had designed, with the help of Taro Pascual, held up and we were able to get some great shots."

What sets this commercial's look apart from that of its counterparts is its use of a special Photosonics 4ML camera. Condon enthuses, "It's very compact, dual pin registered and can go up to 200 fps, but what I really love about this camera is that it has a variable shutter."

The cameraman took advantage of this ability by filming underwater with a 144-degree shutter and Kodak's 5242 stock, a combination that helped to capture the tumbling waves and create a darker, more moody look. (Normally, the shutter angle is set at 180 degrees.) Above the water, Condon altered the shutter angle to 18 degrees and switched to Kodak 5298.

"This [opening] is a very small sliver, so when you're shooting at high speeds like we were, it makes the water appear to crystallize," explains Condon,

who was trying to achieve a stark visual contrast between above and below the surface. "I didn't want it to look too synthetic, so when the [shots] went underwater, I changed the shutter angle to 72 degrees."

Condon owns his own Photosonics camera, complete with a number of underwater housings that he devised himself. Avis says that the housings worked perfectly, but advises allowing extra time in the schedule to seal them after each loading. "Siliconing every joint, changing filters inside the housing, and sealing the battery cabling can mean up to a half hour for every reload," says Avis. "It's not a fast change when you want to reload, and it is a bit frustrating, but fortunately, Ron has two [cameras,] so we were reloading one while shooting with the other."

Though Condon used enhancers on the warm orange and yellow jetski colors, the images that surfaced in postproduction were more impressive than he expected. "I knew I had good images when I delivered the footage, but I couldn't attend the Flame sessions — I had only 12 hours to prep the cameras and fly to Germany for my next shoot," explains Condon. "Most of the time. when you shoot second-unit, the footage just goes away and you don't hear anything until you see it on television, but Merit was nice enough to call me in Germany to tell me how pleased he was with the results "

The cinematographer credits the success of the shoot to Avis' ability to respect his creative input. Condon feels that this commercial represents some of his best work. "I think this commercial finally captures an underwater image I've been trying to get for a long time," he explains. "I'm very excited about it because it's the first time that my creative input has been left intact. Directors have a vision, but cinematographers also have a vision, and I think if they were listened to a bit more, most spots would benefit."

Client: Yamaha Motor Corporation USA
Title: "Amazing Grace"
Cinematography: Ron Condon (water)
and Aaron Bowen (land)
Director: Meiert Avis
Production company: Windmill Lane
Production agency: Ground Zero

# compiled by Chris Pizzello



# Infinite Video Lavering

Editing Technologies Corporation has announced an expanded feature package for their Ensemble Gold non-linear series editing systems. Through multiple video channel control, the Ensemble Gold now includes infinite video layering for compositing and effects.

Ensemble Gold edit controllers combine the ease and flexibility of nonlinear editing with traditional features and power. Time-line clip management is combined with full EDL functionality. Effects and transitions are produced with high-performance external switchers and DVE's for maximum quality and creativity. Ensemble Gold eliminates the need for pre-digitizing and pre-selecting of scenes and footage. Clips can be rolled in from tape or randomly accessed from the hard drive. The system is currently available to control the Tektronix Profile, an internal disk array, or a variety of external video disk arrays.

Editing Technologies Corp., (805) 529-7074, FAX (805) 529-6744.

#### Xenon 7 KW with Ballast

The newest in lightweight electronic Xenon fixtures are now available in 1-to 7-kilowatt packages. All sizes are single-piece electronic with the ballast located in the head fixture. As the first manufacturer to offer the ballast in the head fixtures, Tek Lighting Corp. has focused its most recent efforts on increased light output and the spot and flood features of all its Xenon lights, thus reducing the "black hole."

The 7-kilowatt fixture offers all the same features as Tek Lighting Corp.'s 1, 2 and 4/2 KW fixtures: electronic ballasts, electric focus, focus mounting system, bright reflectors and light weight. The 7 KW is approximately 88 lbs.

Tek Lighting Corp., (615) 370-3694, FAX (615) 370-3380.

# Professional Audio Products

HHB Communications, Inc. featured a wide selection of professional audio products at this year's NAB Convention, held from April 15-19 in Las Vegas.

HHB unveiled both of their PORTADAT portable DAT recorders, as well as the CEDAR audio restoration processor. The company also demonstrated an improved DAT tape line, as well as new magneto optical disks.

The PORTADAT PDR1000 4-head portable DAT and the timecode-equipped PDR1000TC, along with an extensive range of professional accessories, were on display at NAB. The equipment was recently used for recording such films as *Apollo 13* and *Get Shorty*.

The CEDAR audio restoration processor includes a PC-based suite of audio restoration modules and four rackmount devices dedicated in turn to de-clicking, de-crackling and azimuth correction. The DH-1 de-hisser effectively removes broadband noise in real-time without the need for an encode/decode process.

Improvements in HHB's Advanced Media Products' upgraded line of professional DAT tape include longer tape lengths, a new anti-static lid which halves discharge times, an improved tape formulation increasing the secure archiving period to 30 years, and reusable, shatterproof PP cases.

Their high-performance 5.25-inch magneto optical disks are for use in disk-based recorders such as the Genex GX2000. Available in 1.3 and 2.6GB versions, the HHB MO disks feature a unique sputtered thin film to assure high

carrier-to-noise ratio, and an anti-static hard coating to repel dust and minimize scratching. The disks have an archival life in excess of 30 years, and tests show that the disks are capable of 10-inch erase/write/read cycles. The company's CDR74 6x speed-recordable CD and the DDS90M DAT data cartridge were also featured at NAB.

HHB Communications, Inc., (207) 773-2424, FAX (207) 773-2422.

## **Platform Advancements**

Sci-Tech Award-winning Spacecam Systems, Inc. has designed several advancements to its platform, specifically for the commercial/advertising venue.

A nose-mounted "Action Arm" gyro-controlled attachment has been introduced, allowing virtually unlimited helicopter or speed boat maneuverability for the filming of cars or other vehicles. Mounting bracketry for the Hughes 500, Bell 206/Jet Ranger and 206L/Long Ranger model helicopters has also been introduced. This allows for faster flight speeds, which are especially useful in air to air sequences, and cuts down on flight time to and from shooting locations. Bracketry for all helicopter models has been streamlined to insure that rigging is done in the most efficient manner. Changing sides of aircraft or camera car applications is now done in a matter of minutes. Lastly, motion-record capabilities have been designed to interface with the increasing use of CGI material used in today's commercial markets.

Spacecam Systems, Inc., (818) 889-6060, FAX (818) 889-6062.

#### **Lens Advances**

Canon, one of the leading manufacturers of a wide range of broadcast and industrial quality video lenses, exhibited a number of new products at the NAB Convention in April.

The first 70X Digital Lens, the DIGI-SUPER 70, features a 70 times zoom ratio and the longest telephoto and widest angle combination of any lens. It pro-



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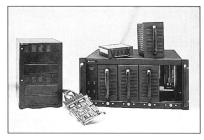
4650 LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD N. HOLLYWOOD CA 91602 USA 818-752-3104 800-5-CAMERA FAX 818-752-3105 vides 33 percent greater magnification, as compared to the highly regarded 55X field lenses.

The first family of ENG lenses, Canon's industry-standard IF plus lenses, include the widest angle J9aX5.2B IRS/IAS, as well as the J15aX8B IRS/IAS, J20aX8B IRS/IAS, J33aX11B IAS and J33aX15B IAS.

The new IS-20B Image Stabilizer Adaptor incorporates Vari-Angle Prism technology. It is designed to be front mounted to Canon's J20aX8B and 1/2" H20zX6 ENG zoom lenses, eliminating shaking and vibrations commonly associated with shooting from a moving vehicle or on the run. Built-in Vari-Angle Prism Lenses, J13aX9B KRS-V and J14aX17B KRS-V, are also available.

Canonbeam is a wireless line-of-sight communication system which transmits and receives bi-directional broadcast quality video (up to 4 channels) and audio (up to 9 channels) signals. Canonbeam also features a unique auto-tracking adjustment for simple set-up of the system. This feature also assures continuous operation, even from the tops of buildings prone to sway and vibration. Unlike radio, no frequency allocation is required.

Canon USA Inc., (201) 816-2906, FAX (201) 816-2909.



## **Disk Array Storage**

Rorke Data has introduced the MAXARRAY, a PCI-based disk array. This latest addition to the Rorke Data line of digital storage solutions features a 4- drive, split bus, dual channel, PCI-optimized accelerator designed to conserve valuable PCI slots for other boards in combination with the latest in Fast/Wide SCSI-3 hard drive technology.

Custom configurations include: single or dual channel PCI host boards with available Fast/Wide SCSI-3 interface, fault-tolerant RAID configurations, 3 ½ or 5 ¼ hot swappable drives, additional storage options including CD-R, DLT, DAT and/or Optical and redundant power supplies. Additional specifications

include 2GB to 36GB of capacity, and 4:1 video compression ratio with the capacity for recording up to 8 audio tracks simultaneously. Each MAXARRAY ships complete with all the necessary cables, terminators and software.

Rorke Data, Inc., (612) 829-0300, 800-328-8147, FAX (612) 829-0988.

# **Digital Sound Upgrade**

Digital Theater Systems is introducing the upgraded offspring of their original DTS-6, called the DTS-6D. The new version begins where the previous model left off, but adds many improvements. While the DTS-6D maintains compatibility with current industry standard multi-channel systems such as Ultra\*Stereo, Kintek, Dolby and Smart analog processors, an additional allnew digital output feature is now available allowing easy interface to the Ultra\*Stereo DSP-60S and Cinema Acoustics CA-CP600 digital processors. The DTS-6D also features three CD-ROM drives that increase play time to up to five hours. Internal switching between mono and split surrounds has been removed and both uses are now available on the output connector at all times. Highly visible LEDs improve viewing angle of system status, while re-settable circuit breakers replace fuses.

Digital Theater Systems, (310) 274-7800, FAX (310) 274-7838.

## **Digital Editors**

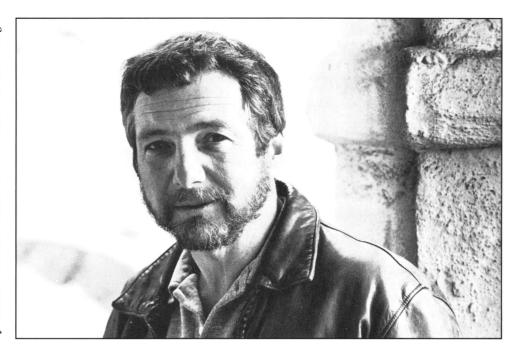
D-Vision Systems, Inc. has announced the full release of Version 1.0 of its Windows-NT-based PostSUITE workstations.

D-Vision PostSUITE features include full CCIR-601 resolution with up to 350 Kbytes per frame; over 100 real-time and accelerated DVEs; MediaSNAP and "cut and paste" editing tools; and true 32-bit networkable Windows-NT software in an upgradable family of products:

(1) D-Vision PostSUITE, an affordable base line non-linear editing workstation targeted at desktop video users, provides: DVR/35 image resolution; composite and S video (Y/C) I/O; two channels of unbalanced audio I/O with six editable audio tracks; and 2D and 3D rendered transitions.

(2) D-Vision PostSUITE-XE, a dual Pentium workstation targeted at corporate video producers, adds: DVR/70

Robert Primes won the Emmy for his cinematography on My Antonia. His other recent credits include telefilms She Fought Alone, Stolen Youth and Harrison Cry Of The City; plus pilots for Reasonable Doubts, Malibu Shores, The Pastor's Wife and Get Smart. Others: Thirtysomething (1st year) and the features Bird On A Wire and The Hard Way.



# "The Clairmonts have the same attitude I look for in a crew member: enthusiasm. Caring more about the images than about the business," says Director of Photography Bob Primes ASC

remember calling
Clairmont about six years
ago and saying: I need to rent
about a hundred 6x6 grads
and polarizers from you—and
nothing else!" says Bob Primes.

# **Attitude**

"We were going to shoot a car spot, using motion-control time-lapse and a custom rotating filter wheel in front of the lens. Filters usually come in sets and with cameras, of course. A hundred of these exotics would take a serious bite out of their inventory. But Terry said: Let's do it—the shot sounds interesting."

# What I look for in a crew member

"That's the same attitude I look for in a crew member: caring more about the images than about the business. And that's what I get from the Clairmonts—they seem to be enthusiastic about cinematography."

# They supported me from the early days

"They gave me support right from the beginning, when I was far from being an established cameraman. Any custom rig I asked for, they came up with. Not making a lot of money on it. Working on the weekend to get it right."

# Part of the team

"That attitude means they're simpatico—I've learned to think of them as a creative part of

the camera team. They have the same *values*. It's been true for thirtysomething, for Bird On A Wire and for my TV spots."

# They remember a shot years later

"Clairmont is an incredible research bank," says Mr. Primes, "And they're always working on still more innovative things. Years later, both Alan and Denny can remember a shot and how it was done."

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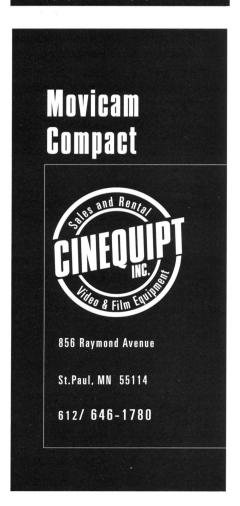


image resolution; component analog video (Y, R-Y, B-Y) I/O; balanced XLR audio I/O and eight playable audio tracks: and D-Vision AutoMASTER and

(3) D-Vision PostSUITE-XED, a powerful dual Pentium workstation targeted at broadcast and post-production facilities, adds: full SMPTE serial digital video (CCIR-601) I/O; high-speed DVR/ 100 image resolution; compression ratios of 3.5:1 with more than 200 KBytes per frame; up to 16 tracks of CD-quality audio and serial DAT and balanced XLR audio I/O

Soon to be released are the D-Vision AutoMASTER option for batch digitizing and program re-capture, and D-Vision EDLs for edit decision list importing/exporting.

D-Vision Systems, Inc., (312) 714-1400, FAX (312) 714-1405.

## **Non-Linear Editor**

Creative Equipment International Corp. has introduced the CEI Blossom, a video workstation that features tilting, 3D animation, special effects and broadcast-quality digital editing.

Blossom's features include: a high-speed Pentium processor, 32 MB of RAM, PCI graphic card, custom effects processor for accelerated effect rendering, NTSC or PAL, Composite/S-VHS video, CD-quality audio and high resolution monitor. Technical specifications include: 720 x 480 video pixel resolution, RS170A and CCIR-601 compliant, and variable compression ratios of 4.5:1 to 50:1.

Creative Equipment International, (305) 266-2800, FAX (305) 261-



# **Digital Video Application**

Data Translation's Multimedia Group, makers of the Media 100 digital video system, has announced Media 100 version 2.6. Complete with the Vincent digital video engine, Media 100 version 2.6 provides 2:1 video compression and PowerImport, EDL import from offline systems.

With Media 100 version 2.6. customers with the Media 100 HDR (High Data Rate) Option will find an increase in the maximum supported data rate to 300kb/frame (NTSC) and 360kb/frame (PAL). This doubling of online image quality provides clients with finished video that sports very little loss of clarity.

By supporting import of the most popular standard EDL formats from CMX and Grass Valley Group, PowerImport allows Media 100 version 2.6 to be used as the online "finishing" system to many linear and nonlinear offline postproduction systems. Using PowerImport, video editors can import an EDL and then online their video programs on Media 100.

PowerImport is an accessory feature to the Media 100 POWER option and is sold separately. The POWER option is designed to optimize productivity by conserving disk space. This option provides a set of editing features enabling customers to create finished videos all-on-one system. Its tools include draft-mode editing, auto digitize/ redigitize, insert edit to tape, logging, import of logs, waveform monitor/ vectorscope, and FastFX — an assortment of accelerated special effects.

Data Translation Multimedia Group, (508) 460-1600, FAX (508) 481-8627.

# **Miniature Radio Receiver**

The Microear miniature receiver, a product of Phonak, Switzerland, has been introduced by TV Equipment in New York. By inserting Microear deep into the user's ear canal, one can receive information or prompting at distances of up to a mile (depending on transmitter and radio conditions).

A VHF user-specified, crystalcontrolled receiver available in the range of 138 to 190 MHz will receive signals of up to several kilometers. Most industrial portable radio transceivers can be programmed to transmit on specific frequencies. Microear features include an automated squelch circuit; a high-sensitivity superheterodyne circuit which provides maximum receiver sensitivity; a selfadapting filter to reduce background noise; battery life of 15-30 hours and a volume control.

Microear is a true, VHF narrow-band, professional mil-grade FM receiver complete with automatic frequency control, which keeps the receiver centered exactly on your transmitter's frequency for optimal reception.

Television Equipment Associates, Inc., (914) 763-8893, FAX (914) 763-9158



# New Roll Size for Gels and Diffusion

The Great American Market has introduced a new sized roll for gels and diffusion, the GamColor Junior Roll. The size of the new roll is 24" x 198," and is available in 121 GamColors and 20 diffusions. All GamColor is a high temperature-resistant, deep-dyed polyester color. The Junior Roll also features an increased yield.

The Great American Market has a full-color Junior Roll poster (17" x 22") available free to customers. The poster features a "frame" made up of the 121 GamColors (including the new 1996 colors) with the appropriate color number designations.

The Great American Market, (213) 461-0200, FAX (213) 461-4308.

#### **Battery Pack**

Trew Audio has designed a battery pack specifically for the needs of location audio engineers called the TREW AUDIO 12/24. The battery pack has two parallel 24-Volt outlets and two individual 12-Volt outlets that may be used simultaneously. The 24-Volt outlets have a total current capacity of 17 Amp hours and the 12-Volt outlets have a current capacity of 17 Amp hours each, allowing for 34 Amp hours total at 12 Volts. All outlets are overload protected with 10 Amp breakers. The battery pack is built into a Pelican "Mini D" case measuring 7" deep x 9 ¾" wide x 10 ¾" long.









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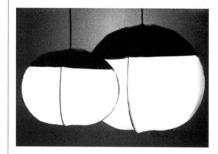
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The TREW AUDIO 12/24 features an automatic circuit (patent pending) that allows its batteries to be charged with a standard 12-Volt lead acid-type charger. The standard output configuration uses four pin XLR-type Neutrik female connectors with pin 1 being negative and pin 4 being positive. There is no connection on pins 2 and 3. The charger input is a concentric connector with the outside sleeve being negative and the inside post being positive.

Trew Audio, (615) 256-3542, FAX (615) 259-2699.



# **Chimera Lantern**

Chimera Photographic Lighting has introduced its Chimera Lantern, a system designed to light a subject or a room in an onmi-directional style (like a space light or Chinese paper lantern). It can be used in a variety of lighting situations: as a base ambient light for a room to a multi-camera round table discussion. Durable, portable and infintely reusable. the lanterns are available in 22 and 30 inch diameters. They function with all Video Pro Speed Rings to allow use of a multitude of light sources. Porcelain socket rings are available as well. One sports a 500-watt medium base, the other a 1500-watt mogul base

Chimera Photographic Lighting, (303) 444 - 8000; Web Site, httl:/ www.chimeralighting.com; e-mail chimera @ usa.net.

# **Optical Extension** Viewfinder

London-based Optex has developed the Optical Extension Viewfinder, an ideal accessory tool for electronic cinematography. Compatible with the Sony DVW 700 and other cameras with similar viewfinders, it runs parallel to the camera. In priniciple, this extension viewfinder is like that of a motion picture camera; it allows the operator to view a scene in a "film style" method from the rear of the camera. A telescopic



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Optex, 44 (0)181- 441-2199; FAX, 44 (0)181 - 449 3646; e-mail, infor@optexint.com



# 35mm Linear Loop Projector

Pioneer Image, Light and Sound has devised a 35mm version of their 70mm Linear-Loop film projector. It boasts a third-greater shutter efficieny. needs no film platters and what little maintenance it requires does not entail lubrication or replacement of geneva mechanisms. The projector mounts to all commercially available pedestal and console type lamphouses, and is (compatible) with all standard projection lenses. In addition to the conventional 35mm format of 4 perforations per image, an experimental 2 ½ perforation format will be available. Pioneer also offers a desk-top size programmable show control unit that allows complete automation of the projector.

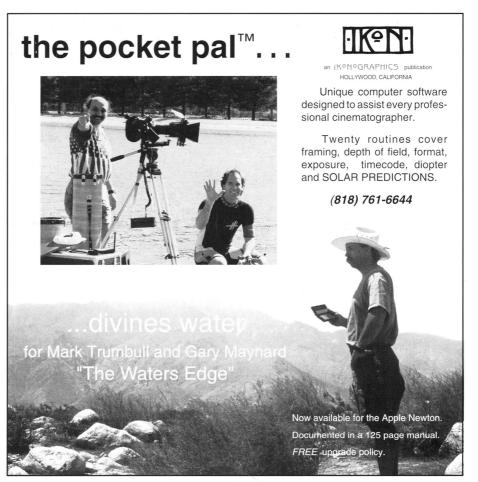
Pioneer, Image, Light, and Sound, (818) 842 - 7165, FAX (818) 842 - 0921.

# Computer-Controlled Mixing Valve

Allen Products now offers the Intellifaucet, a computer-controlled mixing valve that costs the same as conventional mixing values and is easily retrofitted to any type of film processor. Its precise level of temperature control (some 15 settings' worth) is achieved by a high-speed microcomputer that reposi-







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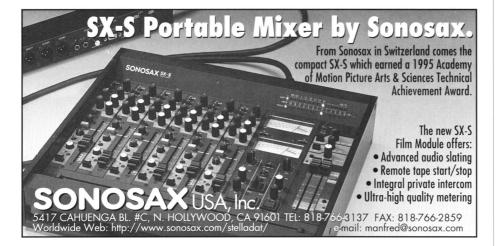
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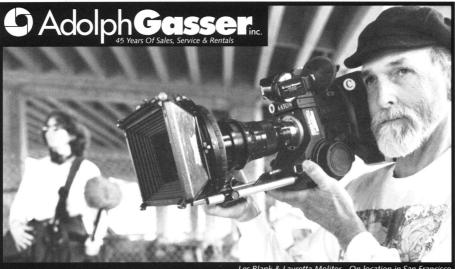
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tions two motor-driven valves 60 times a second. Water temperature remains constant even when the pressure and temperature fluctuates in the hot and cold water supplies. The mixing valve features an oversized motor-driven power transistor, double-buffered microprocessor outputs and overvoltage protection circuitry. It also includes half-inch pipe fittings for flow rates of one to five gpm at 50 psi.

Allen Products, (203) 878 -7454, FAX (203) 877 - 6346.



# **Cranes and Accessories**

Chapman/Leonard Studio Equipment has introduced the Lenny Arm III, an adjustable crane arm that extends to a reach of 44.5 feet (height of 43 feet). Its payload has the capacity to carry a camera, turret, seats, cameraman and assistant at a maximum length of 27' 9" (height of 31.5 feet). For remote camera applications, it can function at a maximum height of 44 feet (reach of 44.5 feet). The patented hand rails on each section of the arm facilitate the crane's assembly and portability, as well as increasing its stability.

Chapman's electric-powered ATB (All-Terrain-Base) is compatible with a variety of crane arms. Capable of running speed, the ATB is equipped with four large balloon tires across the front, and two in the back, that allow it to glide over almost any surface. A variety of tires are available for both on-and off-track use. The ATB's adjustable leveling rods rotate quickly and efficiently.

Chapman's Tow Dolly can be used to obtain moving car scenes from above, alongside and in front of a vehicle. Its tongue can be lengthened up to 7' 8," allowing for a versatility of vehicles and filming perspectives. There are also receptacles for the placement of lights. safety rails, seats and other accessories.

Chapman/Leonard Studio Equipment, (818) 764-6726, FAX (818) 764-2728.

### Points East

# Going Behind the Scenes, and the Screens, of Moving Image History

### by Brooke Comer

Late last month, New York's American Museum of the Moving Image unveiled a step-by-step tour that details how films and television shows are produced, marketed and exhibited. Three years in the making, the \$3 million "Behind the Screen" exhibit showcases a number of historical artifacts that, according to museum founder/director Rochelle Slovin, "help enrich our visitors' understanding of the creative process that runs through all levels of the industry."

For instance, there's a 1908 Pathé 35mm camera Paramount used on some of its early Mary Pickford features and a 1948 Reeves Magicorder, the first piece of sound recording equipment designed specifically for film. Also on display are a praxinoscope, a circa 1940 Moviola Model D, and a 1916 Simplex standard projector. Exhibit-goers can see themselves through a replica of a pre-1930's Mechanical Television, commissioned especially for "Behind the Screen." Its images come not from a scanning electron beam, but a light flashing through a slotted, spinning wheel. Pieces of production design, meanwhile, include Tony Walton's set model from The Glass Menagerie, and a miniature of the mammoth Tyrell Corporation skyscraper designed by Syd Mead for Blade Runner.

"Behind the Screen" (which occupies the museum's second and third floor galleries) begins with a display on the visual phenomena of the pre-cinema era. Ironically, this introductory section was put together by the museum's Digital Media curator, Carl Goodman.

"We include the stop-motion photography experiments that Edward Muybridge and Marey carried out in the late 1800s," Goodman says. "They captured the image of a horse galloping, then broke it down into separate frames, so that for the first time in history, people actually saw and understood the different positions of the horse's feet.

"But," continues Goodman, "once the motion had been broken down, people also had a childlike fascination with re-animating the pictures. And while that served no scientific purpose, it turned out to capture public interest."

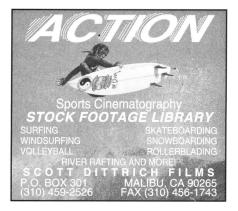
Goodman also pays tribute to the ever-increasing role of digital media in motion picture history with computer-based interactive displays. At any one of the five digital animation stands, visitors can make, and immediately play back, their own animated shorts. A sound editing workstation, 2-D and 3-D computer graphics workstations, and soundtrack jukeboxes are also on hand.

"Their presence here," says Goodman, "represents an advance in terms of how museums use computers. In 'Behind the Screen,' interactive technology mingles with curatorial objects in a way that's very satisfying."

Goodman points out that, traditionally, museums tend to consider computers "an all-purpose solution to exhibition design and educational programming. But the problem with this kind of reliance on one type of communication is that it can leave you feeling that something's missing," he says. "From an aesthetic point of view, computer-dominated exhibitions aren't exactly thrilling. When you fill a museum with computers, they become wallpaper — a room full of boxy, generic kiosks."

Ideally, Goodman believes that museums should invite its patrons "to commune with the past and the present" through computer use. "There has to be a physicality to the experience, allowing computers to augment both artifacts and the human element, not replace them. That's the most exciting thing."

"Behind the Screen" features three types of interactive experiences; the most elaborate utilizes computers to emulate various processes of production. "For instance," says Goodman, "we can let people actually do sound editing and







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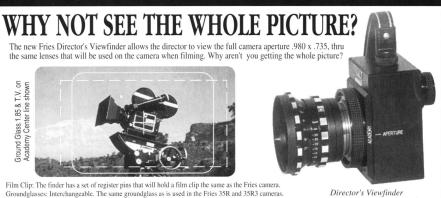
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The 435 is a spinning mirror reflex camera with a 170 degree blanking shutter. The internal 30VDC motor runs the camera from 2 to 150 FPS forward and 2 to 50 FPS reverse, in one frame increments all crystal. The camera is equipped with take-up and supply torque motors.

There are both 1000 ft. and 400 ft. displacement type magazines. A new feature is the light valve which allows the operator to direct all the light to the viewing system, or to the video assist, or combo which splits the light between both viewing and video assist.







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dialogue replacement, so they will then understand in more depth what those processes involve."

The second interactive setup involves a multimedia database, which integrates text, sound and moving images. The third type, Goodman says, involves more basic principles. "Visitors

In "Behind the Screen," interactive technology mingles with curatorial objects in a way that's very satisfying.

can learn about the persistence of vision or the fundamentals of animation, or they can create their own flipbook or animation."

This technology advances so rapidly that three years ago, when "Behind the Screen" was in its planning stages, an exhibit of this caliber would not have been possible. Goodman recalls trying to formulate some of the more complex aspects of the exhibit with traditional techniques.

"We went into a real ADR studio to do our research. They had a 16mm projector with a black-and-white workprint, you recorded lines onto analog tape with a multitrack tape machine and a guy in the control room played it back. But to re-create that experience for our exhibit interaction, we used all-digital technology. You record your voice into a computer and the image is a video projection."

However, Goodman contends that implementing these new tools in no way alters the fundamental understanding of film and television production, noting that he recently returned to an ADR studio to find it fully stocked with state-of-the-art digital equipment similar to that featured at "Behind the Screen."

"We're using them to teach principles [of sound work] that have remained unchanged since the 1930s," he says. "It's the same with picture editing. Today, they use nonlinear editing systems rather than a Kem flatbed, but the principle of juxtaposing images and sequences to create a certain effect has been around since the early years of this century. And because we focus on these principles and not specific technology, we know that 'Behind the Screen' won't go out of date too quickly."

### by George Turner

### The Camera Assistant: A Complete Professional Handbook

by Douglas C. Hart Focal Press, 421 pps., hardback, \$49.95

Professional books for filmmakers are so few in number that it's a distinct pleasure to give Douglas C. Hart a pat on the back for writing something practical for people seeking entry into the wonderful world of motion picture cinematography. A first camera assistant for some 20 years, Hart has worked for ASC members Gordon Willis, Woody Omens, Don Thorin, Laszlo Kovacs, Conrad Hall, Ralf Bode and many other top-line cinematographers. He's a teacher, he knows what he's talking about, and he writes with style.

Right away we're told that there only two absolute rules of camera assisting: "Rule #1: There are no rules. Rule #2: Never forget Rule #1." We're also given two Murphy's Laws of camera equipment checkouts: "1. Whatever piece of equipment the assistant does not look at during the checkout will fail during the job, and 2. No matter how thorough the assistant is during the checkout, something unexpected will fail during the job." It is recommended that "if you can't go for 48 hours without sleep, 12 hours without food, or 8 hours without a bathroom or a phone, then stay out of this business."

Such technical matters as camera threading are not covered because they are detailed in camera manuals. But explored in depth are the responsibilities of the job; how to prevent mistakes; how to interact with other departments such as grips and gaffers; equipment checkout; shooting tests of cameras, lenses, filters, etc.; loading and unloading; focus and depth of field; setup and maintenance; shooting procedures; slating; camera reports; video assists; tools and supplies. Set etiquette (the stumbling block that halts many careers) is set forth very well. There's information about the unions, education and trainee

programs, how to find work, and plenty more, fully illustrated by Mary Mortimer and presented in as practical and as down-to-earth a manner as the subject will permit.

### **Lovers of Cinema:** The First American Film Avant-Garde, 1919-1945

Edited by Jan-Christopher Horak University of Wisconsin Press, 404 pps., cloth, \$49.95

Compiled by the former curator of George Eastman House, who is now director of the Munich Film Museum and a professor at the Munich Television and Film Academy, this is a collection of scholarly articles about the early days of avant-garde filmmaking in America. Inasmuch as Horak himself rediscovered and restored some key examples of these unusual and often artistic movies, he's singularly equipped for the task. As he notes, American "lovers of cinema" have languished far too long in the shadow of European experimenters.

Most avant-gardists worked with little money, had no professional experience or equipment, and had little chance for recognition or financial reward. Their films often were in the vein of contemporary art trends such as surrealism, expressionism, dada, etc. Often they leaned heavily on psychiatric symbolism a la Freud. Their strongest asset was a desire to make movies that could be considered art and had something to say. Some succeeded on both counts. A few of these artists segued into the professional field, such as cinematographers Stanley Cortez, ASC, Floyd Crosby, ASC, Paul Strand, Willard Van Dyke, Irving Browning and Ralph Steiner; writerdirectors Paul Fejos, John Hoffman (also a designer and visual effects artist), Robert Florey, Elia Kazan, Charles Vidor and Dudley Murphy; and MGM's longtime special effects wizard, Warren Newcombe.

The writing is semi-academic. but readable and informative.

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### Hammer Films: An Exhaustive Filmography

by Tom Johnson and Deborah Del Vecchio McFarland, 422 pps., library binding, \$65

A classic example of the little studio that could, Britain's Hammer Films made 165 movies between 1935 and 1978, beginning with a comedy. The Public Life of Henry the Ninth, and ending with an Eastman Color and Panavision remake of The Lady Vanishes. Penurity was painfully obvious in most of the early efforts, but by 1955, when The Quatermass Xperiment was released, Hammer product had achieved a quality look and sound ordinarily found only in high-priced movies. The film's director, Val Guest, said that "having no money just means you have to use your head, that's all."

An even bigger step up was 1957's The Curse of Frankenstein, the first in a string of now-classic extravaganzas that met the highest standards for direction, acting, production design, music, and (especially) color cinematography. Even better was The Horror of Dracula the following year, which made household names of Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, and led to many more pictures in the same, er, vein. Some were weak, some were wonderful but all were imaginative and interesting. Though these distinctive chillers are what most of us recall about Hammer, the company also made swashbucklers, comedies, musicals, psychological dramas, war pictures — everything but Westerns.

The authors provide good synopses and complete casts and credits on the features, list over 75 short subjects and review a fair body of TV work. There are biographical notes on and quotes from executives Michael and James Carreras, as well as directors, writers, producers, cinematographers, actors and other key people at Hammer. The book also features a foreword by Cushing, an introduction by writer/director Jimmy Sangster and an afterword by composer James Bernard. The family atmosphere of the company is captured by Johnson and Del Vecchio, whose work shares the aura of a labor of love that may have been Hammer's strongest asset.

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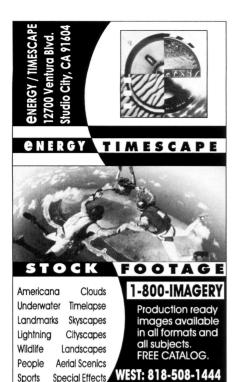
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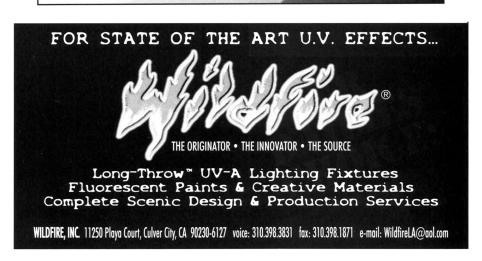
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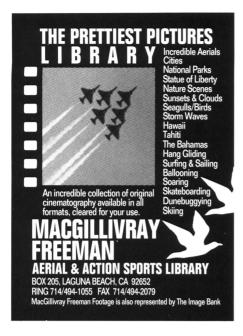
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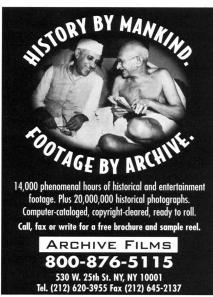






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### From the Clubhouse

### Finnerman and Kovacs Inducted into PGA Hall of Fame

Membership committee chair Gerald Perry Finnerman, ASC and Laszlo Kovacs, ASC were inducted into the Producers Guild of America's Hall of Fame on March 4th during a ceremony held in Los Angeles at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

Finnerman, recognized for his creative contributions to the original *Star Trek* series, was among those decorated with the Golden Laurel Award. Gene Roddenbery's hour-long sci-fi drama, which ran on NBC from 1966-1969, was named a Landmark Television Program, along with *Naked City* and *The Tonight Show Starring Steve Allen*.

The cinematographer worked on the show in the days when *Star Trek* had yet to attain its slice-of-Americana status. He recalls having to cut corners on the then-fledgling series, which was budgeted at less than \$200,000 per episode. "We barely made the schedule," says Finnerman of *Star Trek*, which was canceled twice during its first run. "We bet each other that we wouldn't be back, but somehow for three seasons we did make it back."

A Los Angeles native, Finnerman began his career at Warner Brothers in 1954 as an assistant on his father's crew. He later served as an assistant and operator for Harry Stradling, Sr., ASC on numerous films, including My Fair Lady. Stradling later recommended Finnerman for his first cinematographic gig: Star Trek. After its cancellation, he served as director of photography on the film They Call Me Mr. Tibbs and the television programs Mission: Impossible, Night Gallery, Quincy and Police Woman, to name just a few.

Finnerman received Emmy nominations for his work on the series *The Gangster Chronicles, From Here to Eternity* and *Kojak*, and three for his innovative work on *Moonlighting*. He also won a Best Cinematography Emmy in the long-form category for his work on

Ziegfeld and His Women (1977-78 season).

Sharing the honors at the PGA fete, Laszlo Kovacs was honored as a contributor to *Easy Rider* (1968), director Dennis Hopper's legendary anti-establishment classic. Born and raised in Hungary, Kovacs was already accustomed to dealing with revolution. In 1956, shortly after graduating from film school in Budapest, he defected from his wartorn native land (along with Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC) and headed to the United States.

Kovacs says that it was his curiosity about the universality of the counterculture that drew him to *Easy Rider*, commenting, "It was intriguing that these two guys were really setting off on this huge odyssey, looking for the American dream. And at the end, they lost it. . . it was the American tragedy."

Kovacs' career spans over 30 years and includes such films as *Five Easy Pieces*; *Paper Moon*; *Shampoo*; *New York*, *New York*, *Ghostbusters*; *Say Anything* and this summer's *Multiplicity*.

The other films to be given "landmark" status at the PGA event were A Streetcar Named Desire and It's a Wonderful Life. Each year, a committee from the PGA selects three feature films and three television programs for their Hall of Fame, which was christened in 1991. This year's ceremony marked the first time that both films and television were honored simultaneously: in the past, the honors for film and television were bestowed in alternate years. Previous honorees include the films Bonnie and Clyde, Raging Bull, Midnight Cowbov. Fantasia. Star Wars and The Maltese Falcon, and such television programs as All in the Family, Roots, Gunsmoke, the Ed Sullivan Show, M.A.S.H., Sesame Street and I Love Lucy.

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### **Murphy Joins ASC**

The ASC's newest active member is New York native Fred Murphy. Born in 1942, Murphy studied architec-

ture at the Rhode Island School of Design. He then spent several years as a deckhand on oceanographic vessels before returning to his hometown to break into the film business.

Murphy began as a grip and electrician on commercial crews and shot no-budget documentaries on weekends. In the mid-Seventies he photographed a number of experimental narrative films in 16mm. Claudia Weill's 1978 film Girlfriends was his first 16mm feature. Sometime before that. Richard Pearce had chosen Murphy to shoot his directorial debut, the PBS presentation The Gardener's Son. In 1979. Pearce gave the cinematographer his first crack at 35mm with Heartland, which was honored at the 1980 Berlin Film Festival. Murphy then traveled to Portugal to work as camera operator for esteemed French cinematographer Henri Alekan on Wim Wenders' The State of Things.

In the Eighties, Murphy served as director of photography for Martin Davidson (Eddie and the Cruisers), Peter Masterson (The Trip to Bountiful, Full Moon in Blue Water), David Anspaugh (Fresh Horses, Hoosiers), Tony Bill (Five Corners), John Flynn (Best Seller) and for John Huston on his final film, The Dead. He has also worked with Paul Mazursky on Enemies: A Love Story, Scenes From a Mall and The Pickle.

Murphy's most recent films include *Murder in the First*, directed by Marc Rocco; *A Family Thing*, his latest collaboration with Pearce; and *Faithful*, another project with Mazursky.

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### 13th Annual Golf Classic

119

The ASC's annual Golf Classic will be held at the Camarillo Springs Golf Course on Sunday, June 9. Tee-off is at 8 a.m. There are openings for 120 participants; reservations will be taken on a first come-first served basis. This year there will be a special "hole-in-one" prize of \$10,000. For more information, please contact Patricia Armacost at (213) 969 - 4333. ext. 103. \*

### Filtering Out the Nonsense

### by Steven Poster, ASC

"For years, cinematographers have used silk stockings to soften the look of their video transfer. Finally, someone came up with a series of filters that approximate the look of a stocking to create that nice diffused and colorized look. Directors of photography spend big time and money creating the effect when they want to alter the look of their film.

"Three of our Ranks are now outfitted with a filter slot so that a defocused look can be yours for a minimal charge of \$100.00 per session. Schedule appropriately — we only have one box of filters —or stop off for some Hanes stockings on the way to the transfer."

This item, from the December, 1995 issue of the Tape House newsletter, was shown to me by a friend of mine a producer at an advertising agency,who said, "Isn't this great?" she said, "Now you don't have to bother with that stuff on the set. We can just do it for you in telecine."

After I stopped sputtering, I picked myself up off the floor and tried to control my slowly developing twitch. I asked her if she liked working with the Tape House in question, which is in New York. "Oh yes. They have a very good kitchen. And they really like cameramen. The colorist always tells me that he's going to help the cameraman when he does the transfer."

I took her aside, calmly, and talked about the real process of telecine and what should happen in a session. I also explained that in California we have had filter slots on the Ranks for years and nobody charges for the use of them. I explained furthermore that there is a considerable difference between diffusing during original image capture and doing it in telecine.

This incident pointed out very serious differences between West Coast and East Coast attitudes at tape

postproduction houses. In this particular instance, I was so offended that I decided to investigate further. I was sure that the Tape House couldn't have meant what was printed about the costs and time that it takes to put a filter in the lens during original photography. I assumed that the piece must have been written by some misinformed P.R. flack working for the facility.

I called Mark Polycon, one of the principals at the Tape House, who assured me that he would never knowingly slight the work of the cinematographer. He explained that he knew that adding filters was done all the time in L.A., but that things were different in New York, where not many people used the technique. When I asked if he'd had many directors of photography show up at telecine sessions, he said it was a rare occurrence. Again, I was appalled. After all, this part of the image-making process is the final resolution of our art; to abrogate your right to control and influence this stage of the game is like giving up the right to call the work completely your own. In light of the new postproduction tools that are available (such as Tiffen's digital filter system, detailed in "Enhancing the Palette" on page 65 of this issue). it behooves us all to follow our work through the entire filmmaking process.

During my conversation with Mark, I also asked him about the attitude of New York colorists who offered unsolicited help in "fixing" the image. I explained that I have great relationships with several colorists in Los Angeles who always do my telecine dailies, and that whenever possible I go to the final telecine session, sometimes even traveling to other cities to do it. I am always welcome and the colorist is usually very happy to have my input.

Mark seemed quite shocked to hear this, and explained that it was usually very difficult for the colorist to change anything because the clients often get used to the look of a commercial on the Avid and want to duplicate what they see there. This is why we are killing ourselves to make beautiful images?

Mark went on to say that he knew that hourly telecine rates were much cheaper on the West Coast, but added that West Coast colorists were paid much more. He seemed puzzled by the economics of this reality, but I opined that perhaps the work of a good colorist is valued more highly in Los Angeles.

Naturally, it's not my intention to continue the ridiculous debate about whether L.A. or New York is superior. I love living and working in both places; each has its distinctive charm and advantages, as well as a variety of unique problems and disadvantages. What I am concerned with is our responsibility to track — through the very last process what happens to our images after we shoot them. I am also talking about our responsibility to inform our clients, at every one of those stages, about the ways in which we can best maintain and improve those images. As wellintentioned as commercial clients can be, it is a rare one indeed who shares our knowledge of image presentation and manipulation.

In short, a good relationship with a colorist can be one of the most important partnerships that you will ever develop in your career. If we as cinematographers are truly as concerned about our work as we claim to be, it is imperative for all of us to regard telecine as an integral part of the image-making process, rather than just a "mop-up" session that can be left to others. Passing the buck in telecine jeopardizes the integrity of the work itself, and can only serve to weaken our collective control over the image.

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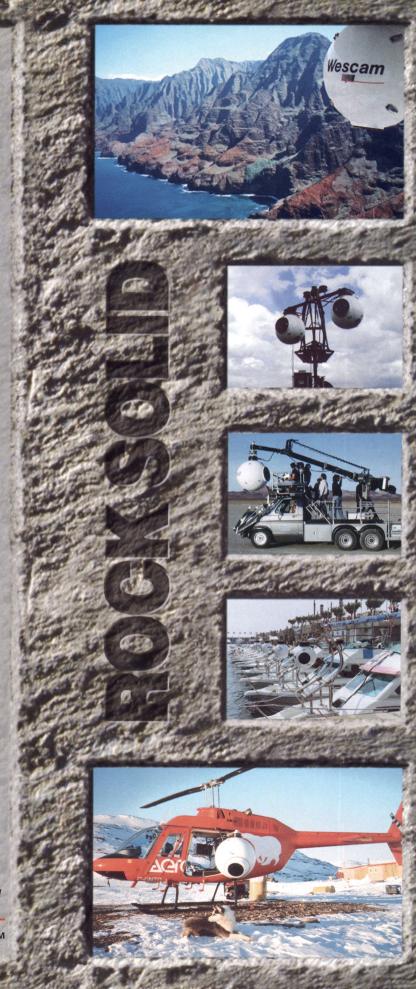
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